BATMAN

BY NEAL ADAMS

BOOK TWO

SHOWCASING NEAL ADAMS

THE DEFINITIVE BATMAN ARTIST OF THE '70s

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

All covers and stories pencilled by **Neal Adams**

7 **"You Can't Hide from a Deadman"**
From THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #86
October-November 1969
Writer: Neal Adams
Inks: Dick Giordano

31 **"The Secret of the Waiting Graves"**
From DETECTIVE COMICS #395
January 1970
Writer: Dennis O'Neil
Inks: Dick Giordano

49 **"The Silent Night of the Batman"**
From BATMAN #219
February 1970
Writer: Mike Friedrich
Inks: Dick Giordano

59 **"Paint a Picture of Peril"**
From DETECTIVE COMICS #397
March 1970
Writer: Dennis O'Neil
Inks: Dick Giordano

75 **"Challenge of the Man-Bat"**
From DETECTIVE COMICS #400
June 1970
Writer: Frank Robbins
Plot: Neal Adams
Inks: Dick Giordano

93 **"Man or Bat?"**
From DETECTIVE COMICS #402
August 1970
Writer: Frank Robbins
Inks: Dick Giordano

111 **"Ghost of the Killer Skies"**
From DETECTIVE COMICS #404
October 1970
Writer: Dennis O'Neil
Inks: Dick Giordano

127 **"Marriage: Impossible!"**
From DETECTIVE COMICS #407
January 1971
Writer: Frank Robbins
Inks: Dick Giordano

143 **"Red Water, Crimson Death"**
From THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #93
December-January 1971
Writer: Dennis O'Neil
Inks: Neal Adams

167 **"The House That Haunted Batman"**
From DETECTIVE COMICS #408
February 1971
Writers: Len Wein and Marv Wolfman
Inks: Dick Giordano

183 **"A Vow from the Grave"**
From DETECTIVE COMICS #410
April 1971
Writer: Dennis O'Neil
Inks: Dick Giordano

Y KILL
EY KILL
NLY CHANCE
HUMAN
RVIVAL!

UNH...

UH...UH...

UH...UHN...

THE--ANTIDOTE!
IF--IF ONLY I CAN
REACH IT!

ONE FINAL...AGONIZED
EFFORT... AND...

GOT
IT!

SUPERMAN
DC
NATIONAL COMICS

the BRAVE and the BOLD

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

NOV.
NO.86
12¢

presents

BATMAN AND DEADMAN

WE WERE FRIENDS, BATMAN...

BUT YOU MUST DIE...

SO I CAN LIVE!

YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM A DEADMAN!

A LITHE, ANIMAL-LIKE FIGURE DARTS FROM SHADOW TO SHADOW... PAUSES... AS IF AWAITING A **CUE** FOR HIS STEEL-TAUT MUSCLES TO SPRING INTO ACTION...

THEN...

YOU AND YOUR GANG HAVE MADE YOUR LAST MISTAKE, COLLINS!

TIME TO CLOSE UP SHOP, BOYS! THIS EXTORTION RACKET ENDS RIGHT HERE!

SAY IT AGAIN!

:UHHN:

BATMAN-- THANK GOODNESS! I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER GET HERE! ANOTHER MINUTE AND YOU'D'VE NEEDED A BLOTTER TO CLEAN ME UP!

NO NEED FOR :UH: CONCERN, MR. BATES! WE WERE WATCHING ALL THE TIME... AND COMMISSIONER GORDON IS JUST OUTSIDE IN CASE ANYTHING GOES WRONG!

STILL, BATMAN, BEING A PATSY IS VERY TRYING!

YOUR SACRIFICE IS APPRECIATED, MR.--

ROBIN, WHAT'S UP?

TIME... BATMAN...

YOUR TIME IS UP--AND THIS IS YOUR FINISH!

WHA--?

2

THEN, LIKE LIGHTNING...

DROP IT, ROBIN!

WHAT'S COME OVER HIM?

WAP

THIS SMOKE PELLET WILL BLIND HIM JUST LONG ENOUGH!

AS THE GUN CLATTERS TO THE FLOOR, ROBIN SLUMPS AS IF THE EVIL FORCE WHICH ANIMATES HIM, SUDDENLY DRAINS AWAY...

ROBIN... DICK, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?

BATMAN, WHAT'S ALL THE COMMOTION? SOMETHING GO WRONG WITH YOUR PLAN?

W-WHAT AM I DOING-- HERE ON THE FLOOR? I... REMEMBER BENDING OVER THAT THUG... THEN... NOTHING!

OR... WAS... ..... OFFICER... GIVE ME YOUR GUN!

QUICKLY...

I'M ABOUT TO PERFORM A SERVICE FOR MANKIND!

3

TO BE PRECISE...THE SERVICE OF OBLITERATING MANKIND'S GREATEST MENACE--THE *BATMAN!*

COMMISSIONER ...NOT *YOU*, TOO...? IS EVERYONE MAD?!

AGAIN THE SPRING-TRIGGER REFLEXES, OF GOTHAMS GUARDIAN COME INTO PLAY, AND...

POW

SPEYANG

BUT IT *MUST* BE! MY OLD FRIEND...

DEADMAN...

IS TRYING TO *KILL* ME!

WHAT'S GOING ON...? I JUST BLANKED OUT--

YOU *JUST* TRIED TO *KILL BATMAN*, AND SO DID I-- BUT--BUT...

THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER... BUT IT'S TOO INCREDIBLE TO BELIEVE...

BATMAN! WAIT--!

LOW

BUT AS **BATMAN** RACES FROM THE DARKENED WAREHOUSE...

HAHA HAHA

IF I'M RIGHT AND IT **IS DEADMAN**, I'M IN BAD TROUBLE! THERE'S NO WAY TO FIGHT HIM...

...HE CAN'T BE SEEN...

:TAP: :TAP:

...BUT HE **CAN** ENTER AND TAKE OVER ANYONE'S BODY...

...AND USE IT AS A **WEAPON** TO TRY TO **KILL** ME! **WHOOPS!**

SWIIISH

VERY GOOD, **BATMAN!** BUT HOW LONG DO YOU THINK YOU CAN KEEP IT UP? **HAHAHA!**

...BLIND MAN SNAPPING OUT OF IT... BUT I SEE NOTHING ELSE!

WHY IS HE HUNTING ME LIKE THIS?

THE FIRST TIME WE MET, WE WORKED AS A TEAM!

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?

5

BEFORE BATMAN CAN RUN ANOTHER TWENTY YARDS...

TOO MANY PEOPLE...

MOMMY, LOOK! IT'S BATMAN! AND THAT MAN IS THROWING SOMETHING AT HIM!

SECONDS LATER...

KRASH

FLYING ATTACHÉ CASE... AND HEAVY ENOUGH TO KNOCK MY BRAINS OUT!

HEY, DENNY, LOOK AT THAT-- SOMEBODY'S TRYIN' TA BUMP OFF BATMAN!

I'M RUNNING A MADMAN'S GAUNTLET THAT HAS NO END...

WUMP

EVERY HUMAN I SEE IS A WEAPON IN THE HANDS OF DEADMAN!

SCREEEEE

UH-OH

ONLY ONE THING TO DO...

A POWERFUL LEAP AND PERFECT TIMING COMBINE TO CARRY *BATMAN* UP AND OVER THE CAREENING TRUCK, AND THEN...

...GOTTA GET AWAY FROM PEOPLE!

BLAM

HA... SMART... BUT A FUTILE EFFORT, *BATMAN!*

FOR NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO, I'LL FIND A WAY TO GET YOU!

YOU DON'T HAVE A CHANCE, *BATMAN!* STAND.. AND TAKE YOUR PUNISHMENT LIKE A MAN!

FINALLY...

END OF THE LINE, BATMAN!

7

YOUR ROPE IS ALL PLAYED OUT, BATMAN-- YOUR DEATH WILL BE SMALL PAYMENT FOR INHUMAN SINS!
WHAT? DEADMAN! STOP... FOR A MINUTE! WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS...? WE WERE FRIENDS!
FRIENDS?! HA! YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT? I'M HERE TO KILL YOU! TO WIPE OUT YOUR MISERABLE EXISTENCE!
YOU'RE A LIAR! YOU ARE NOT HERE TO KILL ME-- AND I CAN PROVE IT!
8
???
WELL, READER, HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS?

CONFUSION CLOUDS THE EYES OF *DEADMAN'S* HOST-BODY...

W-WHAT DO YOU MEAN--I DON'T WANT TO KILL YOU? I'VE BEEN TRYING TO, FOR THE BETTER PART OF AN HOUR!

BUNK! YOU KNEW HOW EASILY I COULD DISARM ROBIN AND COMMISSIONER GORDON! I WAS IN *NO* DANGER! I HAD A GOOD EXERCISE SESSION WITH YOU IN THE STREET!

BUT THAT'S ALL!

THOSE BODIES YOU PICKED COULD ONLY HAVE HURT ME BY *ACCIDENT!*

AND AS FOR THAT PIGEON FANCIER YOU INHABIT NOW ...ONE SOLID PUNCH WOULD FLATTEN HIM!

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KILL ME, DO IT THE SIMPLE WAY...

JUMP INTO MY BODY AND MAKE ME JUMP OFF THE ROOF ...CLEAN AND SIMPLE!

NO... BUT... I DIDN'T...

YOU DIDN'T-- *WHAT?* ...WANT TO KILL ME?

WHAT'S GOING ON, *DEADMAN?* WHY ARE YOU ACTING LIKE THIS?

IS SOMEONE IN CONTROL OF YOU OR...

NO! NO... STOP IT...

YOU'RE TRYING TO CONFUSE ME!

ARRGHH

:HUH:? WHAT'S GOING ON--*BATMAN*, WHAT'S UP?

BLAST IT! *DEADMAN'S* OUT OF HIS BODY! CAN'T EVEN TALK TO HIM NOW!

9

UNFORTUNATELY FOR **BATMAN**, ALL THE QUESTIONS HE HAS ARE ABOUT TO BE ANSWERED... HALF-WAY AROUND THE WORLD AND A FEW HUNDRED FEET BELOW THE PRYING EYES OF ONLOOKERS...

THIS IS THE NEW CITADEL OF THE **SOCIETY OF ASSASSINS**, AND DEATH STALKS ITS EVERY CORRIDOR!

THIS GENTLEMAN IS CALLED THE **SENSEI**, WHICH MEANS TEACHER!

WILLIE SMITH! YOUR FAILURE TO DESTROY **NANDA PARBAT** HAS BEEN RECORDED! NOW I WILL HEAR YOUR DEFENSE AND THE TESTIMONY OF THE GIRL, LOTUS!

IT'S QUITE COMPLICATED, SENSEI, AND... ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE!

I WILL BE THE JUDGE OF THOSE TWO ASPECTS!

I AM WILLING TO ACCEPT FOR THE MOMENT THAT BOSTON BRAND, ALIAS **DEADMAN**, STILL EXISTS IN GHOST-LIKE FORM! CONTINUE FROM THERE!

ACCORDING TO LOTUS, WHEN **DEADMAN** CONFIRMED THAT HIS KILLER, "THE HOOK," WAS DEAD, BY **YOUR** HAND, SENSEI, HE CAME TO THE LAND OF NANDA PARBAT TO SEEK OUT **RAMA KUSHNA**, AND END HIS OWN EXISTENCE!

HE INTERFERED WITH **MY** PLAN TO DESTROY NANDA PARBAT, AND...

THINKING ME DEAD, HE ENTERED THAT FABLED LAND OF BLOSSOMS AND GOODNESS AND SPOKE DIRECTLY TO THE **BALANCER** OF **GOOD** OVER **EVIL**, **RAMA KUSHNA!**

10

"NO ONE KNOWS WHAT TRANSPIRED BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM, BUT *DEADMAN* LEFT THE GREAT CAVERN WITH RAMA'S BLESSING..."

"EVEN THOUGH HE WAS AS A SOLID PERSON WITHIN *NANDA PARBAT*, HE CHOSE TO GO OUT INTO THE WORLD AS A *GHOST*."

"OF ALL THE INHABITANTS OF NANDA PARBAT WHO HAD COME FROM THEIR EVIL LIVES TO MAKE PEACE, ONLY LOTUS WISHED TO LEAVE. SHE PLEADED...BUT *DEADMAN* WOULD NOT TAKE HER WITH HIM..."

"HE SEEMED DAZED... SUGGESTABLE..."

"I MANAGED TO TAKE HER FROM NANDA PARBAT..."

BOONK

DEADMAN, WHERE ARE YOU GOING? WHERE-ARE-YOU-GOING?

"AND JUST AS *DEADMAN* WAS BECOMING UNSOLID AGAIN, I SHOT HIM WITH A POISON DART...BUT BECAUSE OF HIS ALMOST UNREAL NATURE, HE WAS ONLY SLIGHTLY AFFECTED..."

MUST-GET-THE-SENSEI... HE-IS-MY-ENEMY-

TELL ME... WHO IS-YOUR-BEST-FRIEND?

MY FRIEND... I GUESS *BATMAN*... HE'S MY FRIEND... ONLY FRIEND!

NO! *NO!* LISTEN TO ME...

THE *SENSEI* IS YOUR *FRIEND!* IT'S *BATMAN* WHO IS YOUR *ENEMY!* YOU MUST *REMEMBER!*

REMEMBER, YES... *BATMAN* MY ENEMY!

I WAS HOPING TO TALK *DEADMAN* INTO WORKING FOR US, BUT HE CHOSE THAT MOMENT TO DEPART!

AND IF HIS ANGER FOR YOU, *SENSEI*, IS TRULY TRANSFERRED TO *BATMAN*, WELL--

RARELY HAS ONE REDEEMED HIMSELF AS WELL AS YOU HAVE, SMITH... YOUR STRATEGY WILL SOON BEAR FRUIT!

AND WITH *DEADMAN* BUSY, I CAN GO FORWARD WITH MY PLAN TO DESTROY *NANDA PARBAT... UTTERLY!*

NO MORE WILL THERE BE A REFUGE FOR THOSE WEARY OF EVIL...

UNREST, DISSENSION, REVOLUTION, MURDER AND DESTRUCTION WILL RUN RAMPANT!

AND *THERE*, READY TO REAP THE SPOILS OF THE CARNAGE, WILL BE THE *SOCIETY OF ASSASSINS!*

OUR SERVICES WILL BE *GREATLY* IN DEMAND!

WHILE BACK IN GOTHAM, *BATMANS* FUTILITY LEADS HIM TO...

MAYBE I CAN FIND SOME CLUE THAT'LL EXPLAIN HIS ODD ACTIONS!

HILLS' CIRCUS! *DEADMAN* WORKED HERE BEFORE HE WAS KILLED!

MISS LORNA HILL, I'VE BEEN TOLD YOU MIGHT HELP ME. IT CONCERNS *DEADMAN!*

WHO?!... OH... OF COURSE...

YOU MEAN HIM!

WHAT!?... IS THAT REALLY *DEADMAN!?...* I MEAN, BOSTON BRAND?

NO, *BATMAN!* BOSTON DIED MONTHS AGO! THAT'S HIS BROTHER CLEVE! THEY WERE TWINS!

I'M SO WORRIED ABOUT HIM!

THE CIRCUS HAS BEEN HAVING MONEY TROUBLES, SO CLEVE DECIDED TO DO HIS BROTHER'S ACT FOR PUBLICITY.

BUT HE'S ONLY HAD A FEW MONTHS TO PRACTICE!

STRANGE, HE SEEMED TO STIFFEN THERE FOR A SECOND!...I WONDER--

13

INSIDE HIS BROTHERS BODY, *DEADMAN* CLIMBS TO THE HIGH PLATFORM, WHERE...

AHHH-- BEAUTIFUL... I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW MUCH I MISSED THIS!

ALL RIGHT, BROTHER CLEVELAND, WE'LL PUT ON A SHOW THESE RUBES'LL *NEVER* FORGET!

WITH *REAL* MUSCLE AND SINEW ONCE AGAIN AT HIS COMMAND, *DEADMAN* PERFORMS HIS MOST DARING FEAT. OVER AND OVER HE FLIPS, *FOUR* TIMES...ONLY TO...

MUSCLES NOT SUPPLE ENOUGH! :UH:

--*MISS* THE CATCH BAR!

BELOW, INSTANTS BEFORE...

HE'S GONNA MISS THAT BAR...

14

BAT--

--MAN!

THANKS!

SHORTLY...

DEADMAN, YOU ARE INSIDE YOUR BROTHER'S BODY, AREN'T YOU?!

NEVER MIND THAT! HOW CAN I KILL A MAN WHO JUST SAVED MY BROTHER'S LIFE?

A LIFE I ENDANGERED, BY A FOOLISH, DANGEROUS ACT!

EXCUSE ME!

VASHNU!

RAMA KUSHNA HAS SENT OUT THE CALL. DEADMAN MUST RETURN TO THE BLOSSOM THAT IS NANDA PARBAT!

15

BUT--BUT I CAN'T! I--MUST KILL BATMAN! I CAN'T LEAVE UNTIL I DO!
YOU CAN...IF I GO WITH YOU!...AND TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS MYSTERY, I'LL GO TO ANY CORNER OF THE PLANET!
CLEVE...? IS SOME-THING...
...WRONG? NO, BABY, NOTHING'S WRONG! I'M JUST TAKING A LITTLE TRIP. I'LL BE BACK!
CLEVE...
...IF I DIDN'T KNOW BOSTON WAS DEAD... I'D...SWEAR...
16

SHORT HOURS LATER, A PRIVATE JET (RENTED BY BRUCE WAYNE) WINGS TWO SOLITARY PASSENGERS HIGH ABOVE THE HIMALAYAS...

I'M SURE THIS IS THE AREA! I-- FEEL IT IN MY BONES.

GOOD ENOUGH!

VIP

WUP

VIIP

VIIP

VIIP

ZING

SOMEBODY FIRING AT US! THE CHUTES WON'T HOLD OUT!

IT'S THE *SENSEI* WITH ARMED TROOPS!

DEADMAN LEAVES...

THAT'S WHY RAMA WANTED ME BACK!

...TO THE BEWILDERMENT OF HIS BROTHER!

HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT AM I DOIN' HERE?

BATMAN! ...I-I WAS IN A CIRCUS TENT JUST A MINUTE AGO!

17

WHILE, BELOW...

I'LL BREAK THIS UP SOON ENOUGH!

ENTERING THE BODY OF AN ATTACKER, *DEADMAN* TAKES THE OFFENSIVE...

COME AND GET IT, BOYS!

HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON?

YOOWPP!

UH!

BRING THAT MAN DOWN!

BOK

YOU'VE SERVED YOUR PURPOSE! THANKS, JACK!

I'LL BREAK MY LEGS--! I'LL.....

I'M BACK, *BATMAN!*

AH--GOOD! *DEADMAN'S* BACK IN HIS BROTHER'S BODY! CLEVE WAS IN A PANIC... WE SHOULD HAVE FILLED HIM IN!

18

THANKS TO THE WIND CURRENTS, WE LANDED UPHILL FROM THOSE CHARACTERS! WHICH WAY NOW?

THIS WAY! I REMEMBER FROM LAST TIME IT SHOULD BE JUST OVER THAT RISE ...I HOPE, I HOPE!

THERE IT IS! I KNEW IT! IT'S AS IF I WAS DRAWN HERE TO MY... HOME...

...NANDA PARBAT!

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE MUCH!

TAJ-ZE... I'M BACK! YOU'VE GOTTA HELP.. ME... I'M...

WHAT'S HAP..

EASY, *DEADMAN*, DON'T...

HE'S LEAVING CLEVELAND'S BODY-- AND TURNING SOLID... BUT... SOMETHING'S WRONG! HE'S COLLAPSING!

HE'S HURT... HIS RESPIRATION IS WAY DOWN. HEARTBEAT, TOO!

BUT HOW CAN HE EXIST AT ALL IF HE'S DEAD?

BATMAN! WHERE THE BLUE BLAZES ARE WE-- AND WHO IS *THAT* IN THE OTHER *DEADMAN* COSTUME?

SEE FOR YOURSELF-- RECOGNIZE HIM?

BOSTON!... IT'S BOSTON, MY BROTHER! THE ORIGINAL *DEADMAN*-- BUT *HOW*!?

19

PAY HEED, FRIENDS OF BOSTON BRAND!

HE HAS BEEN POISONED BUT NOT UNTIL HE BECAME SOLID WAS HE COMPLETELY AFFECTED!

THE ANTIDOTE IS CARRIED BY ONE OF THOSE WHO CLIMB TO THIS HAVEN TO DESTROY IT!

THAT MUST BE RAMA KUSHNA!

THAT GROUP OF MEN, THE ONES WHO SHOT AT US! THERE MUST BE *THIRTY* OF THEM!

WE HAVE AN ADVANTAGE...THE ADVANTAGE ON WHICH I'VE BASED MY WHOLE CRIME-FIGHTING CAREER!

THE ELEMENTS OF *SURPRISE* AND *FEAR!*

GO... FRIENDS OF THE NOBLE *DEADMAN!* I WILL CARE FOR HIM AND PRAY FOR YOUR SPEEDY AND SAFE RETURN!

MAY THE GREATNESS OF RAMA BE UPON YOU!

SOON, AS A SCREECHING MOUNTAIN-WIND BLURS THE VISION OF DETERMINED INTERLOPERS...

SENSEI...THAT SCREAMING WIND SOUNDS...ALMOST HUMAN!

EEEEEEEYAAAAAAAAAAAA

NONSENSE!... NEVERTHELESS, KEEP A SHARP LOOKOUT!

THE AIR ITSELF SPEAKS OF DANGER!

20

AYIIEEEEEEE

YYYAGGG! W-WHAT IS IT?

UMPH!

UH!

SOMETHING GOING ON BACK THERE... CAN'T SEE WELL ENOUGH...

HA HA HA

MY GOD!

HA, HA! SURPRISE!

BAM

LIKE GHOSTLY SPECTRES, THE DUO APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR, WREAKING HAVOC UPON THE INVADERS!

STAY AWAY! STAY AWAY!

NO! EYYAGGGH!

RUN! RUN! WE HAVEN'T GOT A CHANCE!

21

STEP OUT INTO THE OPEN, YOU **COWARDS!** EVEN A **GHOST** CAN BE **SHOT!**

I PROVED THAT WHEN I POISONED **DEADMAN!**... SO COME AND GET **YOURS**... **WHAT-EVER** YOU ARE!

AS IF IN ANSWER...

A LITTLE PRESENT **FROM DEADMAN!**

SIGNED, SEALED AND **DELIVERED!**

POW

THIS IS THE GUY! HE HAS THE POISON **AND** THE ANTIDOTE!

LET'S GET IT BACK TO MY BROTHER, IF THAT'S WHO HE REALLY IS!

TWO COSTUMED FOOLS HAVE DESTROYED MY PLAN! TWO COSTUMED FOOLS WILL PAY FOR THAT ACT. YOU WILL BOTH BE LAID TO WASTE BY MY HAND!

BESIDES, I'M FREEZING!

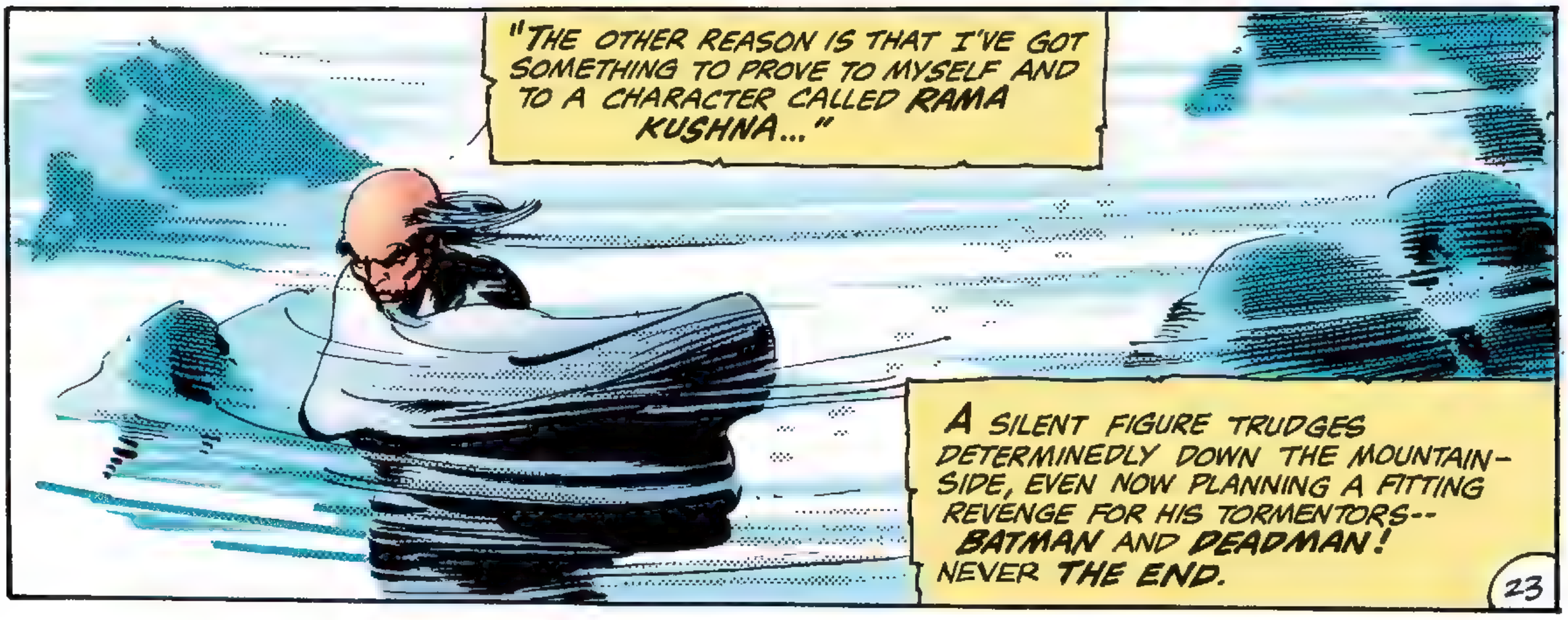
SORRY, OLD MAN, WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE! MAYBE SOME OTHER TIME!

YOU WILL BOTH REGRET THIS DAY!

22

A SHORT TIME LATER...
BOY, I FEEL AS THOUGH MY MIND HAS JUST BEEN THROUGH A WASHING MACHINE!
WHAT HAPPENS NOW, BOSTON? HOW COULD WE HAVE SAVED YOUR LIFE IF YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD?
THIS WHOLE THING IS TOO MUCH FOR ME!

I DON'T KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS, BATMAN! I JUST KNOW THAT I'M STILL DEAD, YET, I EXIST... AND THE ONLY PLACE I CAN BE FURTHER HARMED IS HERE IN NANDA PARBAT! THAT'S ONE OF THE REASONS I'M GOING BACK TO BEING A GHOST!


"THE OTHER REASON IS THAT I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO PROVE TO MYSELF AND TO A CHARACTER CALLED RAMA KUSHNA..."
A SILENT FIGURE TRUDGES DETERMINEDLY DOWN THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE, EVEN NOW PLANNING A FITTING REVENGE FOR HIS TORMENTORS-- BATMAN AND DEADMAN!
NEVER THE END.
23

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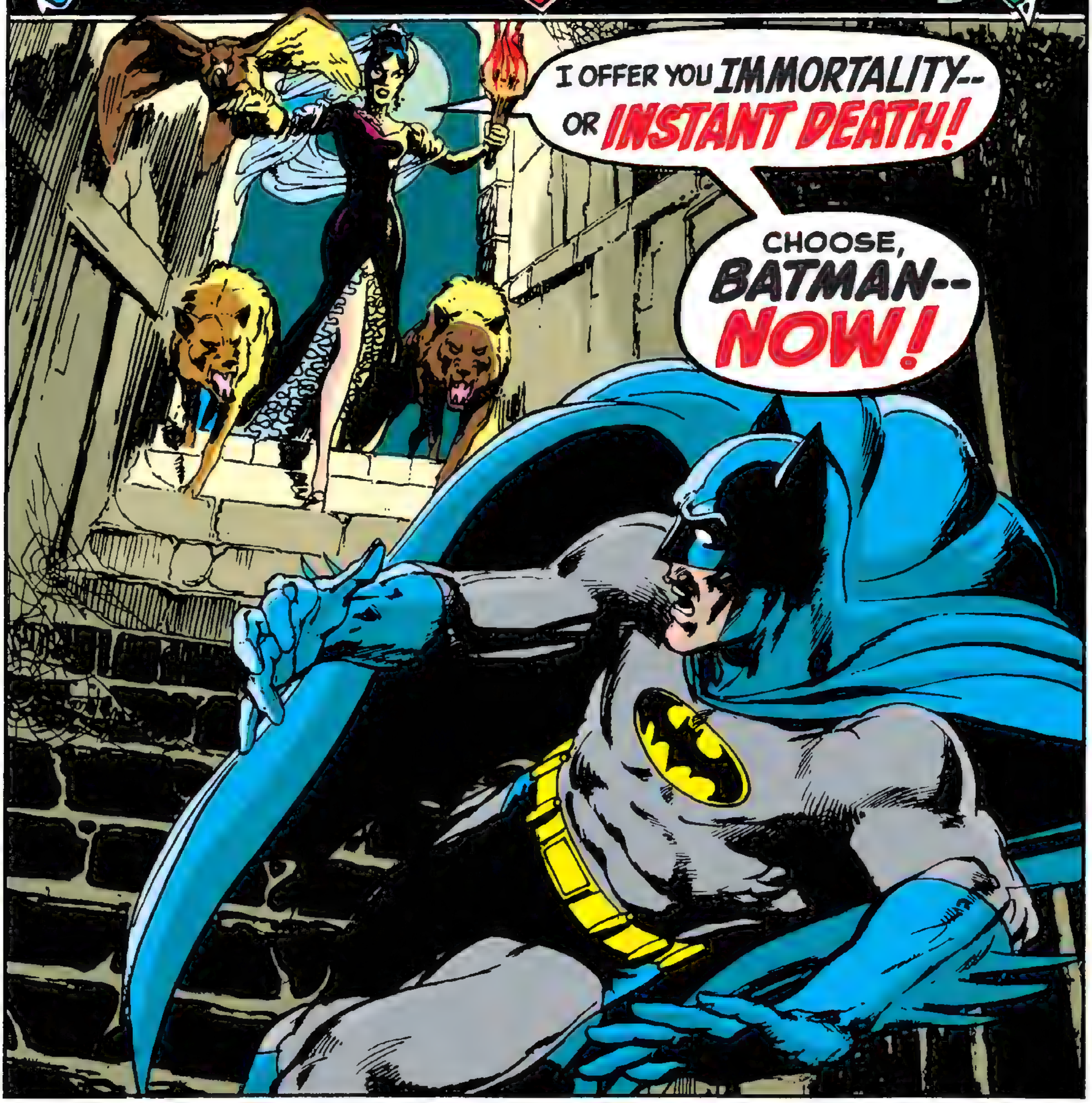


A BLEAK HILLSIDE IN CENTRAL *MEXICO*... A PAIR OF OPEN GRAVES ...AND THE SHADOW OF THE DREAD...

BAT MAN

DOLORES MUERTO 1843-

JUAN MUERTO 1840-

...MARK THE BEGINNING OF AN EXCURSION INTO THE EERIE, THE TERRIFYING, THE DEADLY! STAND STILL, AND HEAR THE WIND HOWLING LIKE SOULS IN TORMENT... SEE THE RISE OF AN ASHEN MOON... BREATHE DEEPLY AND SNIFF THE SCENT OF DEATH... AS YOU PREPARE TO LEARN.....

"The SECRET of the WAITING GRAVES"

QUITE A BASH THE *MUERTOS* ARE PITCHING!

THEY CAN WELL AFFORD IT!

SO ORIGINAL...TO HAVE THE PARTY HERE, IN THEIR FAMILY BURIAL GROUND!

WHERE'S THAT HANDSOME *BRUCE WAYNE*?

SEÑORES AND *SEÑORAS* ...YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE! THE TIME HAS COME FOR *SPORT*!

WILL THOSE PARTICIPATING IN THE *BALLOON RACES* PLEASE TAKE THEIR PLACES?

MOMENTS LATER, SIX DARING GENTLEMEN RISE INTO THE INKY SKY...

REMEMBER... THE FIRST TO REACH THE CLIFF ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE RIVER WINS!

HIGHER AND HIGHER THEY RISE! BREEZES SEPARATE THE DANGLING COMPETITORS! ONE, ***PEDRO VALDES,*** DRIFTS AWAY, AND...

A SOUND... A SOUND OF *WINGS...!*

MOTHER OF GOD! ***TRAINED FALCONS...*** RIPPING THE BALLOON TO ***SHREDS!***

MORE THAN A ***HUNDRED FEET*** TO THE GROUND! I AM ***LOST!***

LIKE A STONE, THE HORRIFIED MEXICAN DROPS... WHEN SUDDENLY, A DARK FIGURE STREAKS FROM THE SHADOWS ...SPEEDS TOWARD THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF!...

IF I CAN HIT HIM ***SOLIDLY...*** AND ***FAST...***

2

... I MIGHT BE ABLE TO CARRY HIM PAST THE ROCKS...

AND INTO THE RIVER!

THEN, AS THE STUNNED VALDES REACHES THE SAFETY OF THE NEAR BANK...

THE BATMAN...! ALWAYS I HAVE THOUGHT OF YOU AS AN AMERICAN *LEGEND!* NEVER DID I *DREAM* THAT YOU WOULD SAVE MY LIFE...

...FOR THAT YOU CERTAINLY *DID*...

CARAMBA! HE HAS *VANISHED!* WAS THIS A *MAN*...OR A *WRAITH*?!

SEÑOR VALDES' QUESTION WOULD BE ANSWERED IF HE COULD SEE HIS SAVIOR ASSUMING ANOTHER IDENTITY, THAT OF *BRUCE WAYNE*, THE *GOTHAM CITY* SOCIALITE AND PHILANTHROPIST...

SOMETHING ROTTEN GOING ON HERE...

IT'S OUT OF CHARACTER FOR *MUERTO*... A NOTORIOUS RECLUSE...TO GIVE THIS HUGE PUBLIC FIESTA...

...AND INVITE EVERY SOCIAL BUTTERFLY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE!

BATMAN DIDN'T LEARN MUCH ON HIS BRIEF TOUR OF THE ESTATE...

...EXCEPT THAT SOMEONE IS KEEPING FALCONS TRAINED TO *KILL*!

AH, BRUCE! IT IS A PLEASURE TO HAVE YOU WITH US AGAIN!

DID YOU ENJOY YOUR *WALK*?

YOU HAVE SOME LOVELY LAND, *SEÑOR*! AND A LOVELY *WIFE*!

ONE DOES NOT EXPECT SUCH A *YOUTHFUL* AMERICAN TO BE SO WELL-*MANNERED*!

SHE *CAN'T* BE ANY OLDER THAN I...YET SHE SPEAKS AS THOUGH I WERE A *CHILD*!

YOU ALSO *DANCE* SUPERBLY! WE MUST GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER *BETTER*!

SHE'S YOUNG, VERY BEAUTIFUL... BUT THERE'S A STRANGE FEELING OF *MUSTINESS* ABOUT HER!

I SEE VALDES IS BACK! APPARENTLY HIS DUNKING DIDN'T DO HIM ANY PERMANENT HARM!

WONDER WHY *HE* WAS SINGLED OUT FOR A MURDER ATTEMPT?

FOR NOW, I'D BETTER CONCENTRATE ON BEING CHARMING!

MOST PEOPLE *FEAR* DEATH! JUAN AND I CHOOSE TO *LAUGH* AT IT!

QUITE AN IDEA YOU AND JUAN HAD...! I'VE NEVER BEEN TO A PARTY IN A *GRAVEYARD* BEFORE!

4

THAT BRAZIER *SHATTERED...!* AND I'M *CERTAIN* I HEARD A MUFFLED REPORT...

SOMEONE'S UP ON THE HILL... *SHOOTING* AT VALDES WITH A *SILENCED GUN!*

EXCUSE ME, *SEÑORA* MUERTO...

ONCE BEYOND THE GLIMMERING CIRCLE OF FIRELIGHT, BRUCE SPURTS FORWARD WITH INHUMAN SPEED, SHEDDING HIS FINERY AS HE GOES...

THEY'RE ABOUT A HUNDRED YARDS FARTHER... BEHIND THOSE BOULDERS...

NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT VALDES... EXCEPT PRAY HE STAYS OUT OF THE LINE OF FIRE FOR A FEW MORE SECONDS...

AIEEE..! WHAT MANNER OF *MONSTER...?*

NEVER HAVE MY EYES *SEEN* SUCH A TERRIFYING CREATURE!

AS I HOPED... MY STARTLING APPEARANCE IS *SPOOKING* THEM!

HE IS MORE THAN FLESH CAN FIGHT!

MANUEL... *HELP US!*

A *BULLET* WILL STILL THIS HOMBRE *MURCIÉLAGO!*

5

GRIMLY, DESPERATELY, THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES... THE MURMUR OF NIGHT BREEZES BROKEN ONLY BY THE PANTING OF THE WOULD-BE ASSASSINS AND THE SOFT STACCATO SOUNDS OF COMBAT...

WHUMP

ABRUPTLY, ANOTHER SOUND... THE SHRILL SCREECH OF A HIGH-PITCHED WHISTLE...

SKA

WEEEEEEEEEP

FIRST, A PADDING OF PAWS OVER THE SUN-SCORCHED EARTH ...A FETID ODOR! THEN A PAIR OF GIANT WOLVES ANSWERS THE WHISTLED SUMMONS, THEIR EYES GLEAMING WITH KILL-LUST IN THE MOONLIGHT...

6

AS THOUGH SHOT FROM A CANNON, *THE BATMAN* LEAPS UPWARD...

DO NOT AIM TO KILL!

SI! IT IS MUCH BETTER TO MERELY BRING HIM DOWN...

...AND LET THE PETS OF OUR MASTER FINISH THEIR WORK!

BUT BEFORE THE THUGS CAN TRIGGER THEIR RIFLES, *THE BATMAN* ONCE MORE LEAPS...OUT, AWAY FROM THE TREE! FOR A MOMENT, HE SOARS AS GRACEFULLY AS HIS NIGHT-FLYING NAMESAKE...

...THEN PLUNGES OVER THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF AND HURLS TOWARD THE JAGGED STONE FLOOR BELOW!...

I HEARD NO SPLASH!

HE DID NOT HIT THE RIVER! HE MUST BE LYING IN THE SHADOWS...

...AND NO MORTAL COULD SURVIVE THAT DROP! HIS FEAR OF THE WOLVES MUST HAVE BEEN GREAT INDEED!

AT THAT MOMENT, THE *MUERTOS* ARE CONFERRING IN LOW VOICES...

THOSE BUNGLERS AND THEIR GUNS! THEY HAVE *FAILED!*

THEN, DEAR HUSBAND, WE MUST ATTEND TO VALDES OURSELVES!

SEÑOR VALDES, YOU APPEAR *UNHAPPY!* WE HAVE A THING TO SHOW YOU THAT WILL GIVE YOU JOY...

COME! IT IS IN THE OLD MONASTERY!

SO IT IS THAT THE TRIO STROLLS TOWARD THE RUIN, ALONG THE CLIFF-EDGE...

THIS THING YOU WISH ME TO SEE...WOULD IT BE A *FLOWER*, PERHAPS?

THE *SEÑOR* IS VERY WISE!

IT WILL PLEASE YOU, *SEÑOR* VALDES... IT MAY EVEN BE WHAT YOU SEEK!

THE *MUERTOS* AND THEIR PREY... JUST ABOVE ME!

IT'S *DOUBLY* FORTUNATE I LEFT MY ROPE HANGING AT THIS PARTICULAR SPOT...

I FIGURED I MIGHT NEED IT TO GET ME TO THE CLIFF BOTTOM IN A HURRY ...BUT I DIDN'T FORESEE THAT IT WOULD SAVE MY LIFE...OR PROVIDE A CONVENIENT *LISTENING POST!*

8

THEY'RE ENTERING THAT RUINED *MONASTERY*...

I COULD *SHOUT*... WARN VALDES... BUT THEN I'D LOSE MY BEST CHANCE AT LEARNING THE MUERTOS' SECRET!

BEHOLD MY TREASURES! LOVELY, ARE THEY NOT?

LOVELY... AND *DANGEROUS!* ACCORDING TO LEGEND, THE *SYBIL FLOWERS* CONFER *IMMORTALITY*...

...BUT AT THE COST OF TOTAL, UTTER *INSANITY!*

DURING YOUR RECENT STAY IN *MEXICO CITY*, YOU MADE A *MISTAKE*, MUERTO...

YOU LEFT ONE OF THE BLOSSOMS IN YOUR HOTEL ROOM! PERSONALLY, I DO NOT *BELIEVE* THE IMMORTALITY NONSENSE... HOWEVER, AS A GOVERNMENT AGENT... I AM ORDERED TO *ARREST* YOU BOTH!

MY FRIEND... SURELY YOU WOULD NOT ABUSE OUR *HOSPITALITY!* I *IMPLORE* YOU...

GET THAT TORCH AWAY FROM MY *EYES*...!

UNNGH!

K-CHOK!

CALL US *MAD*, VALDES? YOU *DARE* INSULT US THUS...?

9

OUR RUSE IS A *SUCCESS*, DEAR DOLORES! THE FIESTA DID INDEED REVEAL THE IDENTITY OF THE AGENT WE *KNEW* MUST BE FOLLOWING US!

CLUMSY FOOL! I GLIMPSED HIS BADGE WHEN HE ARRIVED...

A PITY OUR HIRELINGS FAILED TO...*DISPOSE* OF HIM!

STAND BACK... FOR *I* AM NO CLUMSY FOOL!

THE BATMAN...! HE THINKS TO *CAPTURE* US!

BUT, DEAREST, HE IS QUITE, *QUITE* MISTAKEN!

THE SOMBRE BOAST ECHOES WITHIN THE ANCIENT WALLS... AND A CHILL TOUCHES *BATMAN'S* SPINE...FOR DOLORES' VOICE BEARS THE UNMISTAKABLE RING OF TRUTH!

COME... COME INTO OUR FIELD OF FLOWERS IF YOU WOULD BE OUR NEMESIS!

FOLLOW US, *BATMAN*...WE OFFER NO RESISTANCE!

IT MUST BE A *TRAP...!* YET I SEE *NOTHING* THEY COULD USE AGAINST ME!

THEN, A CLOYINGLY SWEET SCENT FILLS *BATMAN'S* NOSTRILS... AND HIS BRAIN IS *AFIRE*...

REALITY MELTS AROUND HIM! ALL THE WORLD IS A SENSE-SHATTERING *NIGHTMARE*...

NO...

NO...

NO...

NO!

WHACK!

THE MIGHTY ONE FELL *EASILY* TO THE ILLUSION-CREATING POWER OF THE *SYBIL* FLOWERS, EH, MY SWEET?

IT IS NOT SURPRISING! RECALL HOW THE FLOWERS FIRST AFFECTED *US!*

THEY WILL NOT ESCAPE FROM THE VINES WE BOUND THEM WITH! THEY ARE *TENEMOS* VINES...

...THEY RESIST EFFORTS TO PULL THEM LOOSE BY *CONTRACTING* ALL THE MORE!

SHALL WE UNMASK *THE BATMAN?*

NO! LET HIM PERISH IN HIS SECRET GUISE! THIS IS *FITTING!*

AND EVEN *MORE* FITTING WILL BE THE *MANNER* OF HIS DEATH ... A DEATH BY *BIRDS!*

PAINFUL MOMENTS CREEP PAST ON BOOTS OF LEAD... AND *BATMAN* STRUGGLES TO REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS...

I'M *NOT* SEEING THOSE ...*SHAPES!* I MUST *CONVINCE* MYSELF... IT'S ALL AN *HALLUCINATION!*

FORCE MYSELF TO... *REASON* ...TO *ESCAPE!*

CAN'T *BREAK* MY BONDS... SO I'LL *CUT* THEM! GOT TO *CONCENTRATE* ON UNPINNING VALDES' BADGE...

12

WHILE OUTSIDE...

OFF WITH YOUR HOOD, PET! GO AND *SERVE* US!

WITH BEAK AND CLAW... DESTROY OUR *ENEMIES!*

THE BADGE'S EDGE IS A POOR KNIFE... BUT IT SHOULD SERVE TO SAW THROUGH THESE VINES...

SKRAAAAA

FALCONS?! ARE THEY *REAL*... OR PART OF THE *ILLUSION!?*

AAAG!

I CAN *FEEL* THOSE TALONS THROUGH MY BOOT... THE PAIN IS HELPING ME REGAIN MY MIND!

DID I JUST KICK THAT CREATURE... OR *IMAGINE* I DID...?

IS THAT ANOTHER CIRCLING FOR THE *KILL*...? THERE'S NO WAY OF *KNOWING*...!

NO MATTER... THE VINE IS CUT *THROUGH!* ...UNLESS I'M IMAGINING *THAT,* TOO!

13

SNARING THAT BIRD... IF A BIRD *IS* THERE... WOULD BE TRICKY EVEN WITH FULL USE OF MY FACILITIES...

CHUNK

GOT TO STOP THINKING ... SIMPLY *ACT!* DRAG VALDES... AND MYSELF... AWAY FROM THIS FIENDISH GARDEN...

FRESH AIR... MY HEAD'S CLEARING! EVERY-THING VALDES SAID ABOUT THOSE PALE, PRETTY FLOWERS IS *TRUE...!*

IF EVER THEY WERE CIRCULATED AMONG THE WORLD'S POPULATION, THERE WOULD BE AN EPIDEMIC OF *MADNESS!*

MUERTO LEFT HIS *TORCH*...

...IT WILL SERVE TO BURN... TO *OBLITERATE*... THE *SYBILS!*

JUAN, MY BELOVED HUSBAND... *LOOK!* OUR FLOWERS... OUR *LIFE*... THE ONLY PATCH OF *SYBILS* LEFT...

... OUR IMMORTALITY BEING BURNED FROM THE SOIL!

14

HURRY...WE MUST *SAVE* THEM...!

NO... STAY, MY DOLORES! REMEMBER... EXTREME EXCITEMENT *CANCELS* THE EFFECT OF THE FLOWERS' FUMES...

...WOULD YOU BE *OLD?*

...WOULD YOU LOSE YOUR BEAUTY...? LET THE CHILL OF AGE SEIZE YOUR BONES...?

...YOUR LIMBS STIFFEN...

...THE SKIN OF YOUR FACE CRACK AND CREASE...

...YOUR HEART WITHER... WOULD YOU OPEN THE PORTALS...

...THE P-PORTALS OF... DEATH ITSELF...

DOLORES
MUERTO
1843-1969

JUAN
MUERTO
1840-1969

16

THE END

INVESTMENT... SPIRIT OF BATMAN... CHRISTMAS SPIRIT... HMMM...

AS THE SPIRIT
THE PEAC
NIGHT BE
ONE WITH
CITY, D
CREEPS
COVER
SKY
AND
NEW
BEGI

SUPERMAN
DC
NATIONAL COMICS

BAT MAN

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

NO. 219
FEB.

"DEATH CASTS THE DECIDING VOTE!"

S·3/3

NIGHT FALLS ON *CHRISTMAS EVE* IN *GOTHAM*, THE SIDEWALKS BUSTLE WITH LAST-MINUTE SHOPPERS. A PEACEFUL--ALMOST HEAVENLY SCENE-- WOULD INJUSTICE AND TRAGEDY *DARE* CREEP IN? THERE IS TOO MUCH CONTRARY EXPERIENCE TO BELIEVE OTHERWISE FOR... *THE BATMAN!*

THEN, AS THE EERIE *BAT-SIGNAL* SHIMMERS AGAINST A SNOW-FILLED CLOUD, THE ATMOSPHERE TAKES ON A *CELESTIAL* COMPOSITION. FOR TWO THOUSAND YEARS, MYSTICS HAVE EXPERIENCED THE MANY MYSTERIES SURROUNDING *CHRISTMAS*...

TONIGHT THERE WILL BE ONE MORE...

the Silent Night of the BATMAN

WHAT'S THE EMERGENCY TONIGHT, *COMMISSIONER?*

NO EMERGENCY, *BATMAN!* QUITE THE OPPOSITE, IN FACT! I CALLED YOU IN BECAUSE *CHRISTMAS EVE* IS NOT A NIGHT FOR YOU TO BE OUT *PATROLLING*-- "'TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY!"

LIKE THE SAYING GOES--*YOU* KNOW IT AND *I* KNOW IT... NOW TELL *THEM!* CRIME AND DISASTER AREN'T INCLINED TO OBSERVE *HOLIDAYS!*

TONIGHT IS GOING TO BE... *DIFFERENT!* I *KNOW* IT!

HE SOUNDS ALMOST *INSPIRED*.. BUT NOTHING EVER HAPPENS BY JUST *SAYING* IT!

C'MON, *BATMAN*-- HOW ABOUT CONTRIBUTING YOUR DEEP VOCAL CHORDS TO SOME *CHRISTMAS CAROLS!*

WHY *NOT?* I CAN ENJOY MYSELF UNTIL *SOMETHING* HAPPENS...

Jingle bells,
Jingle bells,
Jingle all the way!
Oh what fun
it is to ride
In a one-horse
open sleigh...

Oh!

Dashing through the snow.
3

We three Kings of orient are

Bearing Gifts we traverse afar...

SUPPORT WAYNE FOUNDATION CHRISTMAS DRIVE FOR THE BLIND!

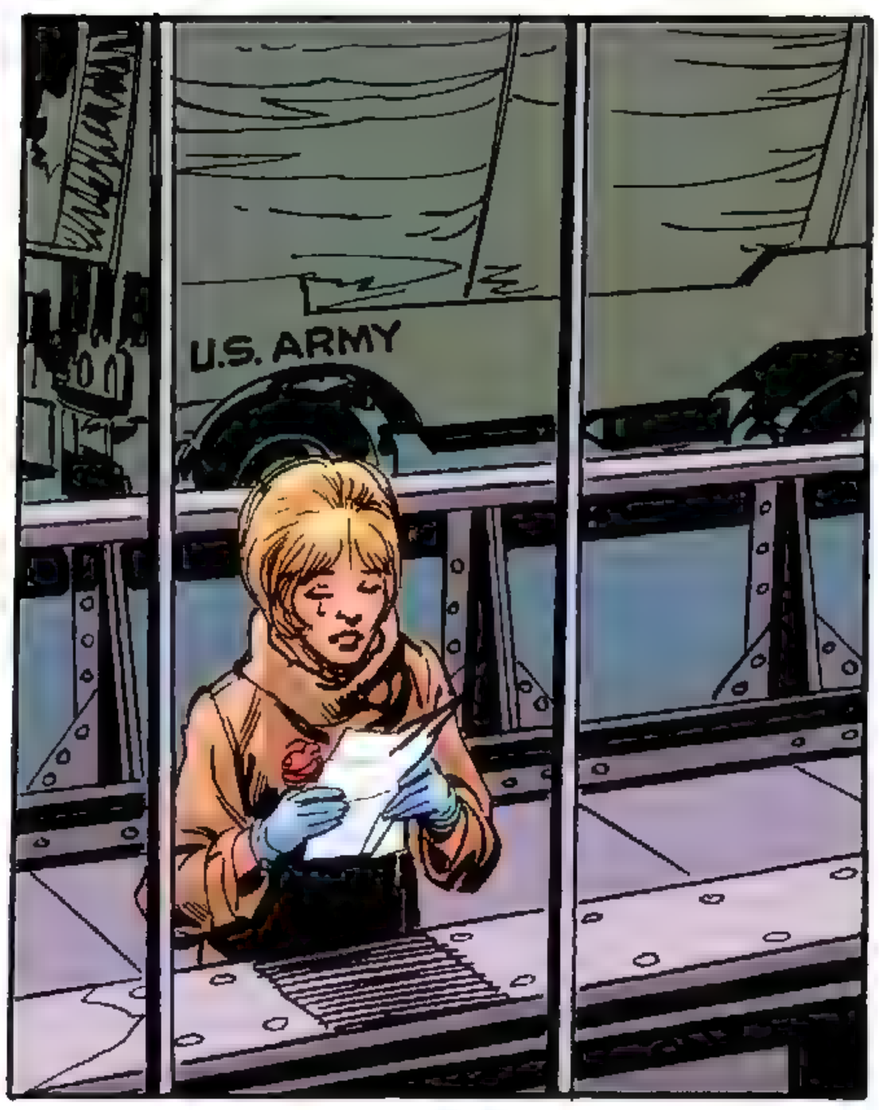
KEEP GOTHAM CITY CLEAN

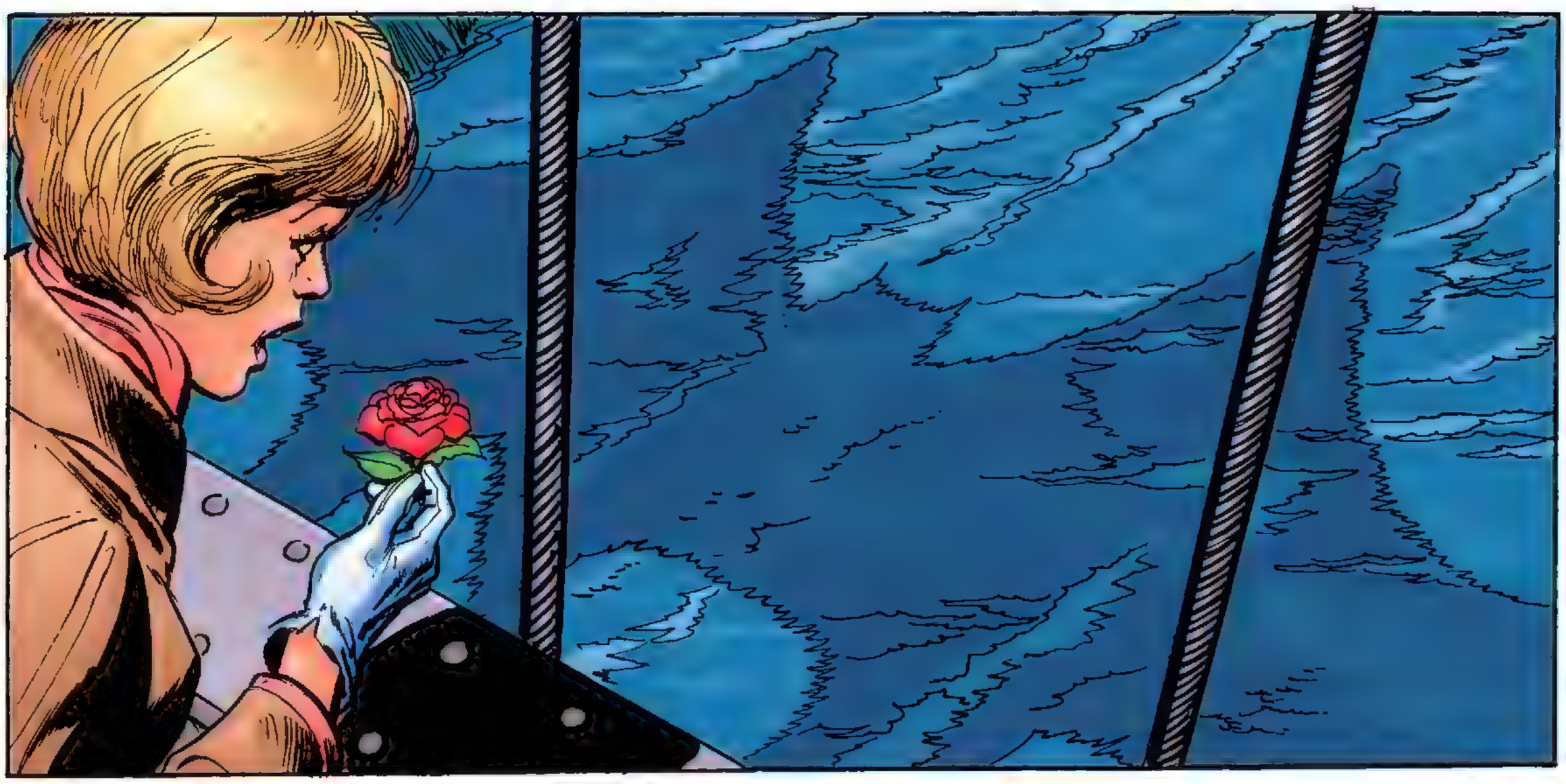
♪ you better watch out,
you better not cry,
you better not pout
I'm telling you why
Santa Claus is
coming to town... ♪
He's making a list

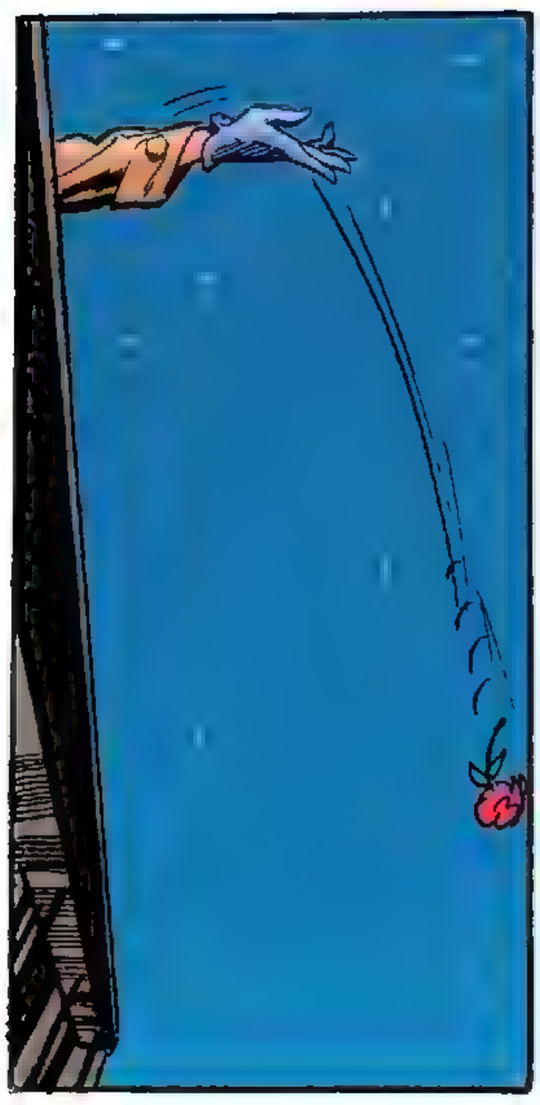
Checking it twice...

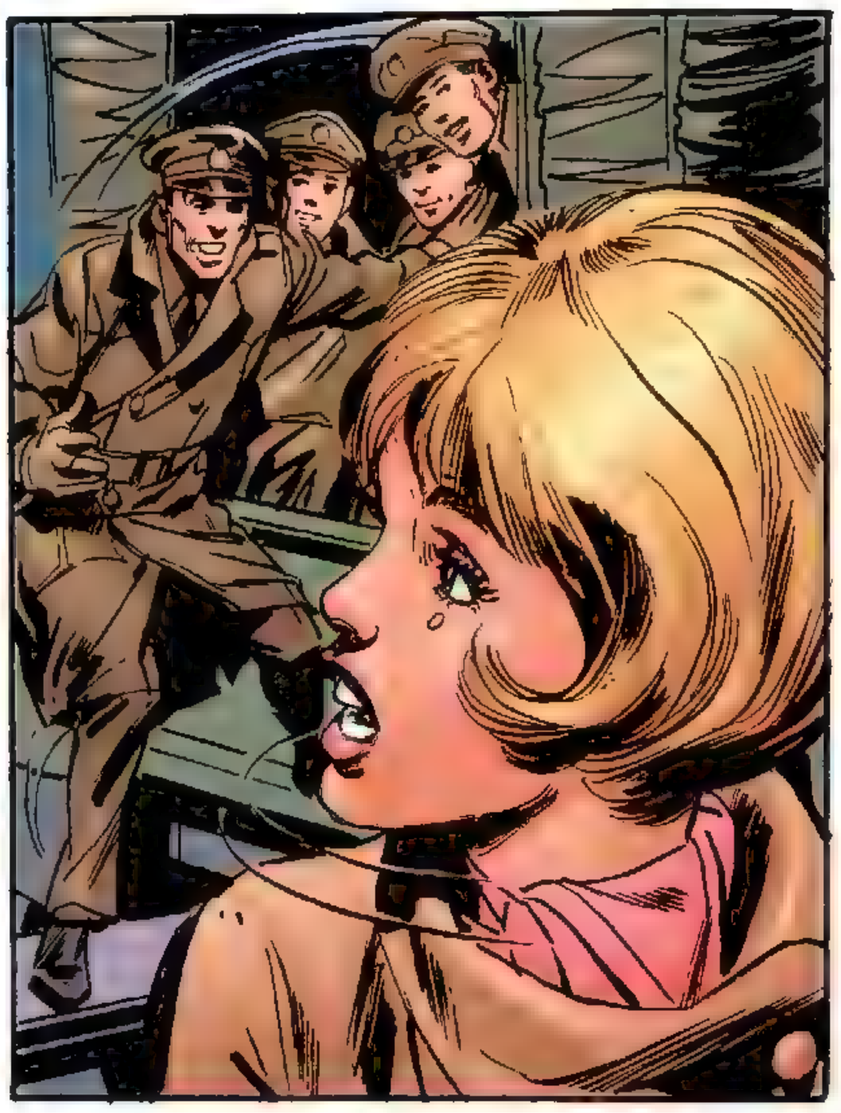
To my wife, Patty... From your loving husband, Ted

Flowers


U.S. ARMY







Silent night, holy night... All is calm, all is bright...

GOOD HEAVENS! IT'S SIX O'CLOCK! WE'VE BEEN SINGING HERE ALL NIGHT!

WE HAVEN'T BEEN DISTURBED BY ONE REPORT OF ROBBERY, MURDER, DRUG-PEDDLING...

...ANYTHING!

IT'S LIKE THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS PEACE TOOK HOLD ON EVERYONE...!

BUT WHAT IS THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT, BATMAN--MIGHT IT NOT BE...YOU... OR I?

WHA...?

7

...MY EYES... PLAYING TRICKS...

EH? AMAZING--

WE'VE BEEN WAITING HERE ALL NIGHT AND NOT A *SINGLE CALL* HAS COME IN FOR YOU! IT APPEARS THE INVESTMENT YOU'VE PUT INTO THIS CITY HAS *PAID OFF* TONIGHT-- GIVING YOU A *NIGHT OFF!*

dick.

INVESTMENT... SPIRIT OF BATMAN... CHRISTMAS SPIRIT... HMMM...

AS THE SPIRIT OF THE PEACEFUL NIGHT BECOMES ONE WITH THE CITY, DAWN CREEPS AND COVERS THE SKYLINE AND A NEW DAY BEGINS...

FOR TWO THOUSAND YEARS, MYSTICS HAVE EXPERIENCED THE MANY MYSTERIES SURROUNDING CHRISTMAS TODAY THERE IS ONE MORE

the Silent Night of the BATMAN

IN THIS HOLIDAY SEASON OF GOOD WILL, *peace* FROM--

MIKE FRIEDRICH ... writer

NEAL ADAMS & DICK GIORDANO ... artists JULIE SCHWARTZ ... editor

8

I RECOGNIZE THIS
SLICE FROM A MAGAZINE
LAYOUT... IT'S THE MAKE
ESTATE!

SUPERMAN • DC • NATIONAL COMICS

MAR. NO. 397

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Detective Comics presents BATMAN and BATGIRL

OUT OF MY WAY, BATMAN!

NOT EVEN YOU CAN STOP ME FROM JOINING HER!

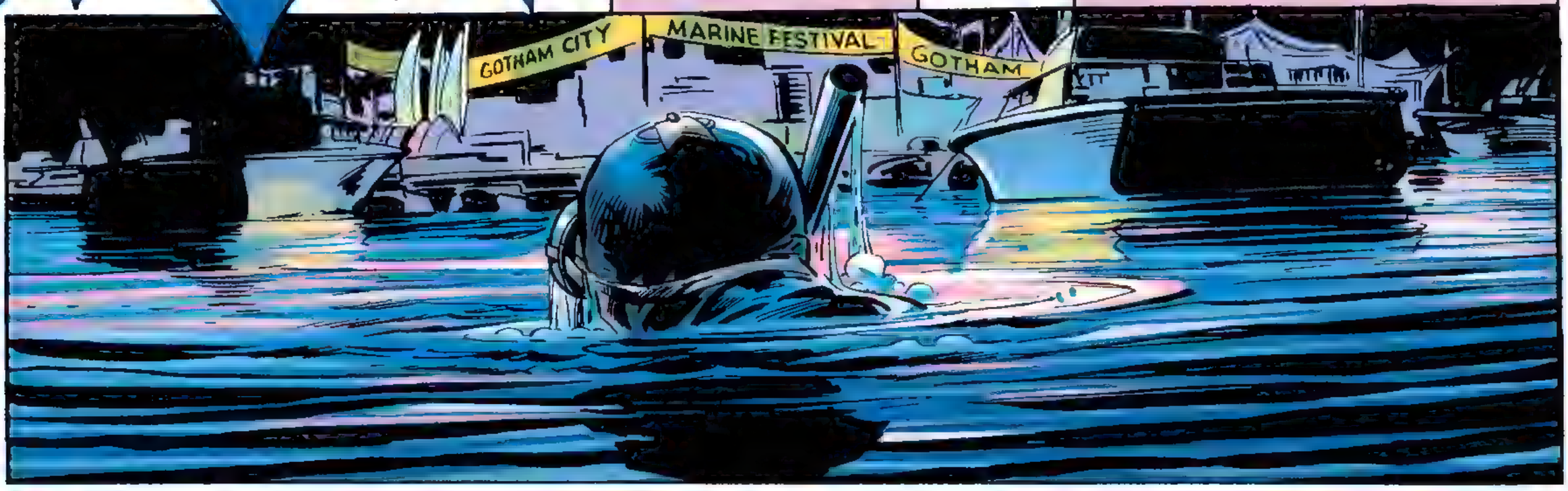
S 362

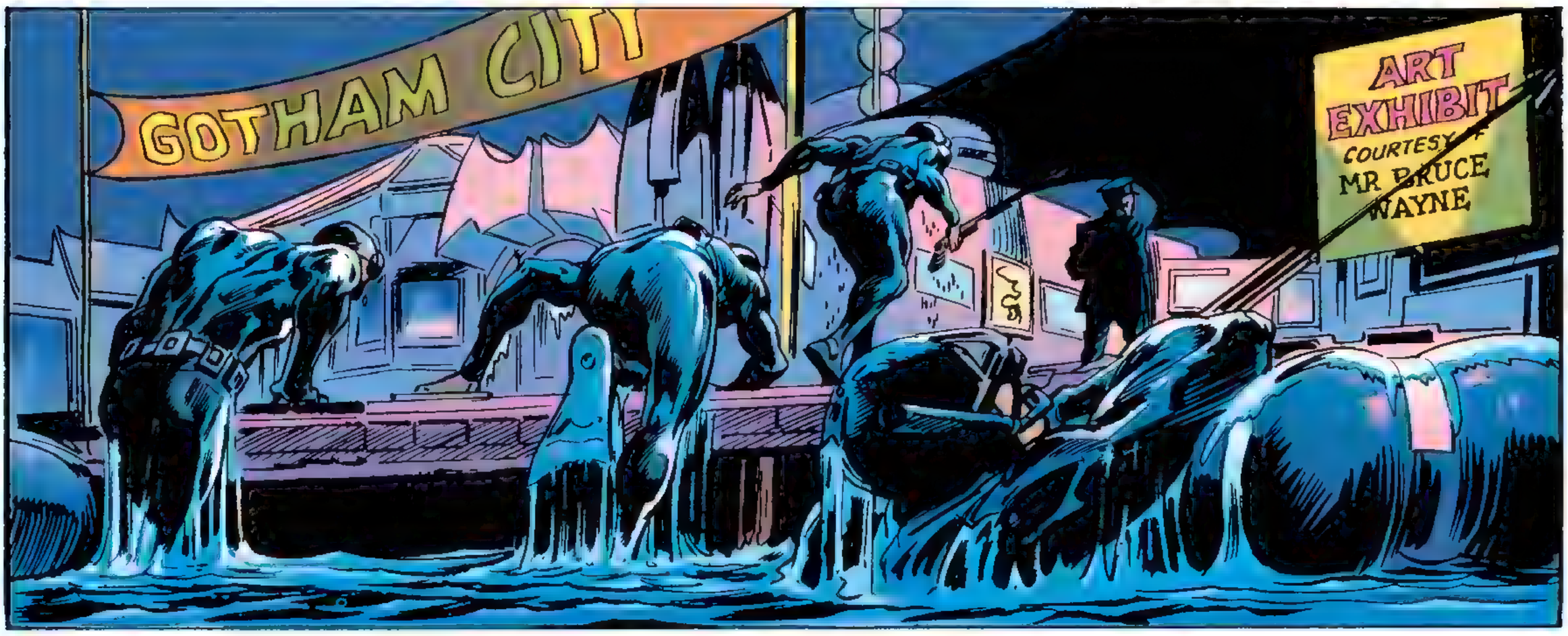
"PAINT A PICTURE OF PERIL!"

A GENTLE TWILIGHT AT *GOTHAM BAY*... A STILLNESS BROKEN ONLY BY DISTANT ECHOES FROM THE NEARBY STREETS AND THE GENTLE LAPPING OF THE SEA. IT IS THE EVE BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE ANNUAL *MARINE FESTIVAL* -- AN EVENT THAT POURS MILLIONS INTO WORTHY CHARITIES... AN EVENT THAT NOW BRINGS FROM THE DEPTHS -- *EVIL!*

STORY BY: DENNY O'NEIL

ART BY: NEAL ADAMS & DICK GIORDANO





THE BATMAN--!

SO WHAT! WE'RE FOUR TO ONE!--NAIL HIM!

HE'S MOVIN' TOO QUICK --UNNGH!

WE TAKE HIM ALIVE, WE'LL BE THE BIGGEST MEN ON THE EAST COAST!--- ARRRRGH!

HOLD IT, LAWMAN!

YOU SO MUCH AS TWITCH AND THIS GUARD GETS IT! JUST ...STAND STILL!

WE'RE FOOLS IF WE TAKE ANY MORE CHANCES! HE... AIN'T HUMAN!

GRAB WHAT WE CAME FOR, NICK! I'LL KEEP A GUN ON--

NO! WE AIN'T SAFE LONG'S HE'S BREATHIN'!

FIRST WE KILL!--THEN WE DO OUR STEALIN'!

IT GIVES ME THE *CREEPS, THE BATMAN* JUST *STANDIN'* THERE...

WHAT'RE WE *WAITIN'* FOR?-- *SHOOT!*

TWNG WUNG

FLUP FLUP

WE *DONE* IT! WE SCRAGGED *THE BATMAN!*

YOU SHOULD'A DONE IT *SOONER!* HE HIT ME LIKE A BLASTED *WRECKIN' BALL!*

I GOT THE PICTURE THE BOSS WANTED!

SECONDS LATER, THE TREACHEROUS QUARTET KNIFES INTO THE MURKY BAY, PAST A STILL, UNMOVING FIGURE...

3

THEN, THE CAPED MANHUNTER ***STIRS***... AND BEGINS TO SLOWLY STROKE TOWARD THE SURFACE...

I ***ALMOST*** DODGED THEIR SPEARS... MOVED MY BODY BEHIND THE CAPE TO AVOID THE POINTS...

ALMOST... BUT NOT ***QUITE!*** ONE OF THEM JABBED A NERVE CENTER IN MY UPPER ARM...

IT'LL BE OKAY IN A DAY OR SO --BUT MEANWHILE, THE ARM IS ***USELESS*** --

--***AND*** HURTS LIKE THE DEVIL! IT'LL BE ***SENSELESS*** TO ATTEMPT PURSUIT IN THIS CONDITION!

MIGHT AS WELL CHECK OUT WHAT THEY STOLE!

ODD... THE ONLY THING THEY TOOK IS A PAINTING BY ***VAN DER SMUTS***-- THE "***STARTLED MERMAID***"--

--THE ***LEAST VALUABLE*** ITEM ON DISPLAY!

STARTLED MERMAID

I ***BLEW*** IT... ***GOOD!*** ALL I CAN DO IS GET HELP FOR THE GUARD...

FOR EMERGENCY ONLY

...AND THEN TAKE CARE OF MY WOUND! I'LL LET THE REGULAR POLICE TAKE CARE OF WATCHING OVER THE EXHIBITS!

HELLO, OPERATOR...

SWIFTLY, THE ***COWLED CRUSADER*** CHANGES TO STREET CLOTHES-- AND HIS OTHER IDENTITY, THAT OF ***BRUCE WAYNE,*** MILLIONAIRE PHILANTHROPIST-- AND RETURNS AT HIS MID-TOWN PENTHOUSE...

4

HMM--LOOKS LIKE THE *CLEANING WOMAN* LEFT THE TELEVISION ON AGAIN!

SHE *LOVES* THOSE HOKEY SOAP-OPERAS...

...PRESENTS A *DOCUMENTARY SPECIAL*--THE LIFE OF THE WEALTHY, MYSTERIOUS *ORSON PAYNE*...

SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG TO DOCTOR MY CLIPPED WING...

FIRST, A DAB OF SALVE TO CLOSE THE CUT...

...FOR *YEARS*, PAYNE HAS LIVED IN A HUGE CASTLE HE HAD REMOVED FROM *SPAIN* --LIVED IN *TOTAL SECLUSION*...

NEXT, I'LL MASSAGE THE NERVE...

A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AGO, PAYNE WAS ENGAGED TO *CATERINA VALANCE*, WELL-KNOWN OPERA STAR... MISS VALANCE *VANISHED*...

AND FINALLY, A BIT OF *YOGA BREATHING* TO RESTORE CIRCULATION...

SINCE THAT DAY, PAYNE HAS REFUSED TO SEE ANYONE...

5

BEGGING YOUR PARDON, MR. WAYNE -- I FORGOT MY *HANDBAG!*

HELP YOURSELF, CATHY!

EH?! FOR SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T *LIKE* THE TUBE ...SHE CERTAINLY *WATCHES* IT ENOUGH!

VILE THING...

CLICK

'BYE, SIR! SEE YOU THURSDAY!

GOT TO *CONCENTRATE* ON THAT THEFT! I COULD LEAVE IT TO THE *POLICE*...

...BUT THE *BIZARRENESS* SEEMS MADE TO ORDER FOR *BATMAN!*

SOMETHING'S NAGGING AT MY MEMORY... SOMETHING I SAW UNDERWATER...

OF *COURSE!* THE ALGAE...THE *SEAWEED!* IT WAS *GLOWING!*

AND THAT GLOW COULD *ONLY* HAVE COME FROM SOME SORT OF *POWER SOURCE*...

...LIKE FROM A *SUBMARINE* EQUIPPED WITH LOW-YIELD *NUCLEAR ENGINES!*

AND SO, AT MIDNIGHT, AT A DESERTED PIER...

THE BATTERY THAT RUNS THIS *UNDERSEA SLED* IS GOOD FOR *TWO HOURS*...

6

THE *INFRA-RED SCOPE* I MOUNTED ON THE SLED'S BOW SHOULD MAKE VISIBLE ANY LINGERING RADIATION...

AH... *THERE IT IS!*

LEADING OUT TOWARD THE *ISLAND*... THE *AFFLUENT* SECTION!

I WONDER WHICH OF THOSE OLD MANSIONS HOUSES A *THIEF*--AND A WOULD-BE *KILLER?*

FOR A FULL FORTY MINUTES *BATMAN* GLIDES THROUGH THE CHILL WATER, UNTIL...

AS I FIGURED ... A SMALL NUCLEAR SUB!

THAT *LADDER* MUST LEAD TO ONE OF THE ISLAND ESTATES!

WHOEVER SET THIS UP MUST HAVE *MILLIONS* TO SQUANDER!

I'M NEAR THE *TOP*-- AND PROBABLY A FEW *THUGS!*

A FEW FEET HIGHER... A FEW SECONDS LATER...

'ZAT *YOU*, CHARLIE? *HEY--WHO'S THERE?!*

WHA...?! THE BATMAN!
I RECOGNIZE THIS PLACE FROM A MAGAZINE LAYOUT...IT'S THE PAYNE ESTATE!
I SHOULD'VE PAID MORE ATTENTION TO THAT TV SPECIAL!

ARRUFF

QUIET, YA HOUNDS! AIN'T NOTHIN' AROUND 'CEPT A FEW BIRDS!

RAF

PAYNE'S CASTLE! RATHER THAN DROP TO THE GROUND AND CHANCE A RUN-IN WITH THOSE KILLER DOGS, I'LL...

WITH A TREMENDOUS PUSH OF HIS THICK-THEWED LEGS, *BATMAN* LAUNCHES HIMSELF ACROSS THE REMAINING TWENTY FEET OF OPEN SPACE...

CABLE-STRONG FINGERS CLAMP ONTO THE SLIPPERY STONE WINDOW SILL...

THAT MUST BE PAYNE HIMSELF...

YES, MY DEARS, YOU *ARE* LOVELY--EVERY ONE OF YOU!

BUT YOUR BEAUTY *PALES* BEFORE MY MEMORY OF *HER!*

HE'S TALKING TO AN *EMPTY ROOM?!* NO... *NOT* TO THE ROOM--TO THE *PAINTINGS* AND *STATUES!*

ALTHOUGH ***SHE*** COULD NOT RECOGNIZE IT, I HAVE A SHARE OF ***GREATNESS***--

--AND A SHARE OF ***MADNESS,*** ORSON PAYNE!

HOW ***DARE*** YOU ENTER MY CASTLE UNBIDDEN?

I ENTER ***ANY PLACE*** WHERE THE LAW IS BROKEN!

AN INTERESTING ART COLLECTION! ***THIS*** ITEM WAS STOLEN EARLIER TONIGHT FROM THE ***MARINE FESTIVAL!***

I WONDER HOW MANY ***OTHER*** WORKS IN THIS ROOM HAVE BEEN STOLEN?

MANY! I ***HAD*** TO EMPLOY THEFT BECAUSE THEIR OWNERS WOULD NOT ***SELL*** THEM TO ME!

MY SECRETARY ***DID*** MENTION SOME BUYER FOR THE ***MERMAID*** A FEW DAYS AGO...

I ***MUST*** HAVE EVERY LIKENESS OF...***HER!*** OF ***CATERINA***...THE WOMAN WHO SPURNED MY AFFECTIONS A QUARTER OF A CENTURY PAST...

SHE ***DISAPPEARED*** WITHOUT A WORD OR TRACE!

I'VE ACCUMULATED GREAT ***WEALTH,*** HOPING TO ENTICE HER BACK--!

WHEN I SAW IT WAS ***HOPELESS,*** I SOUGHT TO CONSOLE MYSELF WITH ***IMAGES*** OF MY BELOVED!

AND I ***REFUSE*** TO BE ROBBED OF THAT CONSOLATION--!

DON'T BE A ***FOOL***--!

10

ZUUMP!

SKASH

PAYNE... YOU'RE *SICK*-- *TERRIBLY* SICK! I'LL *HELP* YOU!

FIRST YOU'LL HAVE TO *CATCH* ME!

THERE ARE LITERALLY *HUNDREDS* OF OBJECTS HE COULD BE HIDING BEHIND! IT'D TAKE ALL *NIGHT* TO SEARCH THIS CHAMBER!

SO I'LL HAVE TO PLAY IT THE *RISKY* WAY...MAKE MYSELF A *TEMPTING TARGET!*

SHOW YOURSELF, PAYNE! DON'T MAKE THINGS WORSE...

YOU THINK ME *INSANE?* THEN I SHALL *REJOICE* IN MY INSANITY--

-- AND IN YOUR *DEATH!*

THE SPANISH DUKE WHO ORIGINALLY BUILT THIS FORTRESS HAD AN *INSIDIOUS* MIND...

...HE DEVISED *DIABOLICAL* METHODS FOR DISPOSING OF HIS ENEMIES!

TOOK ME BY *SURPRISE*--!

BETTER CONCENTRATE ON A SOFT *LANDING!*

BATMAN'S INTENSIVE *JUDO* TRAINING SERVES HIM WELL! HE WILLS HIS BODY TO LIMPNESS AND, AT EXACTLY THE PROPER INSTANT, TWISTS TO LAND ON HIS SHOULDERS AND FOREARMS...

=UH= WALLS AND FLOOR... SMOOTH AS POLISHED GLASS! NO CHANCE OF *CLIMBING* OUT!..

WELL-*DONE, BATMAN!* HOWEVER, YOUR ACROBATIC SKILL MERELY *PROLONGED* YOUR LIFE-- NOT *SAVED* IT!

THE *DEADFALL* I'M LOWERING ONTO YOU WEIGHS *TWO TONS!* IT FITS *SNUGLY* INTO YOUR CELL--

...AS SNUGLY AS A HAND IN A GLOVE! YOU HAVE NO AVENUE OF ESCAPE-- *NONE WHATSOEVER!*

AND SO, *FAREWELL!*

THERE *IS* A CHANCE-- A VERY *SLIM* ONE--!

GOT TO MAKE THIS TOSS *PERFECT*-- THERE WON'T BE TIME FOR A *SECOND* TRY!

I'M COUNTING ON THE *HEAVINESS* OF THE CHANDELIER--AND MY *SWINGING* IT ACCURATELY WITH ENOUGH *MOMENTUM*...

...TO NUDGE THE DEADFALL ENOUGH...

SKAASH

DID IT! THE REST IS ROUTINE...

WHAT THEY SAY OF YOU IS *TRUE*... YOU'RE NO *MAN*... YOU'RE SOME-- *THING!*

GIVE UP, PAYNE-- FOR YOUR OWN *GOOD!*

NO... *NO*--

YOU ALWAYS WANTED ME TO GIVE UP... TO ABANDON MY AMBITION... BUT WHY CAN'T YOU *UNDERSTAND?*

EVERYTHING I DID WAS FOR *YOU!*

GOOD LORD! HIS LAST REMAINING BIT OF SANITY IS *GONE!*

13

--COME TO ME, MY PRECIOUS! TAKE ME IN YOUR ARMS!

HE THINKS HE'S EMBRACING *CATERINA VALANCE*... HIS LONG-LOST FIANCÉE--

--INSTEAD HE'S EMBRACING *CERTAIN DEATH!*

IF MY TIMING IS A *SPLIT-SECOND WRONG*... ... HE'S *FINISHED!*

GNNN--

GOT HIM... BUT I TOOK THE STRAIN OF HIS FALL ON MY BAD ARM...

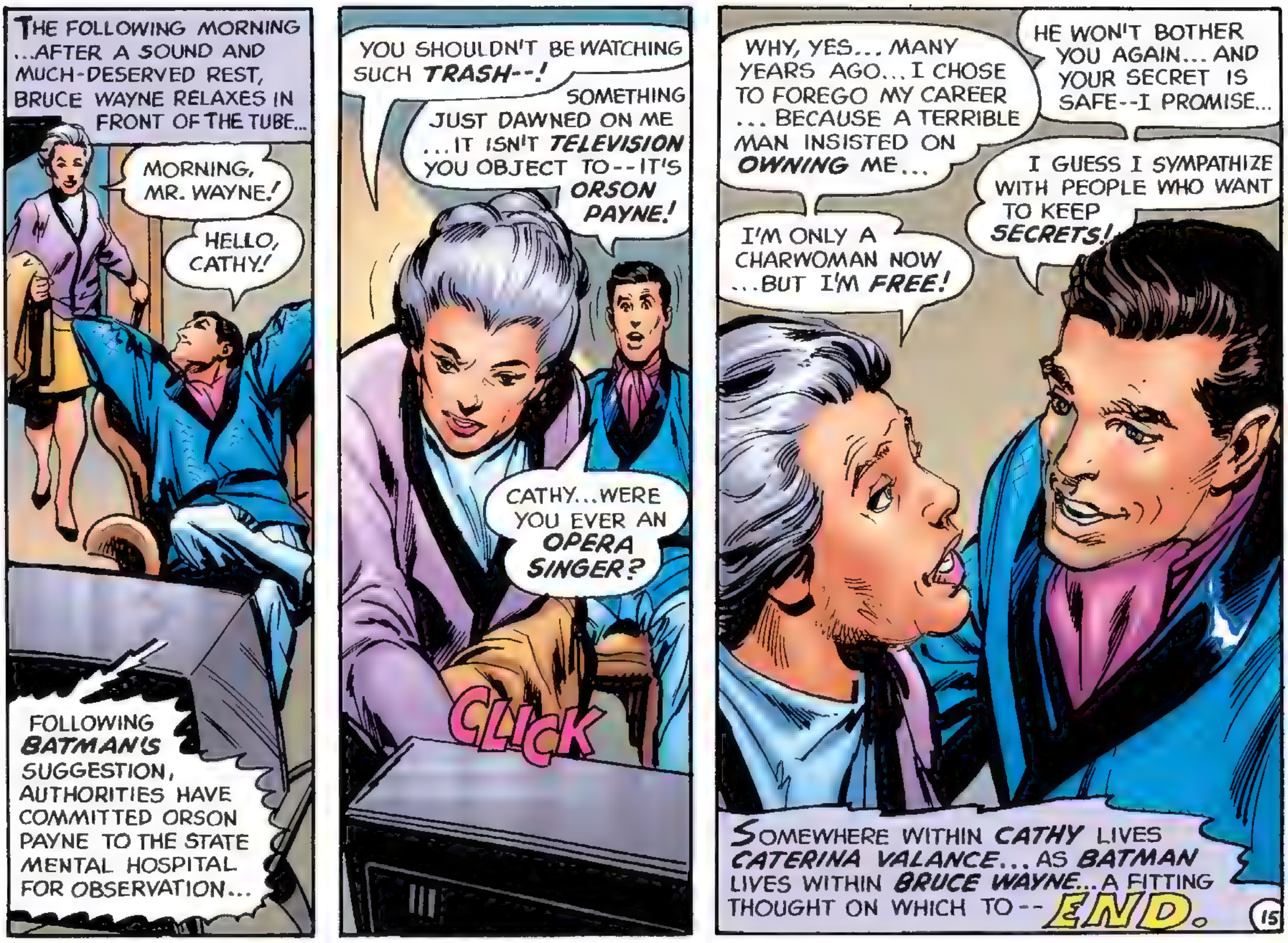
OH, THANK YOU, THANK YOU FOR RETURNING TO ME, BELOVED CATERINA...

I'LL FIND A PHONE... CALL COMMISSIONER GORDON... GET THIS POOR, TORTURED SOUL THE HELP HE NEEDS...

I'M *THROUGH* FIGHTING FOR TONIGHT... AND SO IS PAYNE...

THE PAIN IN MY ARM WILL SOON HEAL... I HOPE PAYNE'S AGONY CAN BE SOOTHED, TOO!

14


THE FOLLOWING MORNING ...AFTER A SOUND AND MUCH-DESERVED REST, BRUCE WAYNE RELAXES IN FRONT OF THE TUBE...
MORNING, MR. WAYNE!
HELLO, CATHY!
FOLLOWING BATMAN'S SUGGESTION, AUTHORITIES HAVE COMMITTED ORSON PAYNE TO THE STATE MENTAL HOSPITAL FOR OBSERVATION...
YOU SHOULDN'T BE WATCHING SUCH TRASH--!
SOMETHING JUST DAWNED ON ME ...IT ISN'T TELEVISION YOU OBJECT TO--IT'S ORSON PAYNE!
CATHY...WERE YOU EVER AN OPERA SINGER?
CLICK
WHY, YES... MANY YEARS AGO...I CHOSE TO FOREGO MY CAREER ... BECAUSE A TERRIBLE MAN INSISTED ON OWNING ME...
I'M ONLY A CHARWOMAN NOW ...BUT I'M FREE!
HE WON'T BOTHER YOU AGAIN... AND YOUR SECRET IS SAFE--I PROMISE...
I GUESS I SYMPATHIZE WITH PEOPLE WHO WANT TO KEEP SECRETS!
SOMEWHERE WITHIN CATHY LIVES CATERINA VALANCE... AS BATMAN LIVES WITHIN BRUCE WAYNE... A FITTING THOUGHT ON WHICH TO-- END.
15

SUPERMAN
DC
NATIONAL COMICS

400th SMASH ISSUE!

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Detective Comics presents

JUNE
NO. 400

BATMAN
ROBIN and BATGIRL

"CHALLENGE OF THE MAN-BAT!"

BATMAN

"CHALLENGE OF THE MAN-BAT"

STORY: FRANK ROBBINS--

ART: NEAL ADAMS & DICK GIORDANO

GOTHAM MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY... AFTER HOURS...

THAT YOU UP THERE, LANGSTROM? COULD HARDLY MAKE YOU OUT AMONG THOSE OVER-SIZED *PAPIER-MÂCHÉ* BATS!

YUP, CURATOR WILKINS-- IT'S ME, BURNING THE MIDNIGHT OIL AGAIN...

TO GET THIS NIGHT-CREATURE HABITAT EXHIBIT COMPLETED FOR NEXT MONTH'S OPENING!

AND I GUARANTEE THIS LARGER-THAN-LIFE RE-CREATION IS GOING TO BE AN *EYE-OPENER!*

BUT AS SOON AS THE DOOR OF THE GREAT EXHIBIT HALL CLANGS SHUT...

HE COULDN'T LEAVE SOON ENOUGH FOR ME!

NOW I CAN GET BACK TO MY **REAL** WORK WITH **LIVE** COUNTER-PARTS!

THE BRIGHT LIGHT HURTS YOUR WEAK EYES, DOES IT? SOON YOU'LL SLEEP, LITTLE FURRED FRIEND...

AND SOON I WILL HAVE A NATURAL ABILITY EVEN THE GREAT **BATMAN** DOESN'T POSSESS!

WHILE UNDERGROUND IN ANOTHER PART OF GOTHAM CITY...OTHER MEN HAVE COME UP WITH A WAY TO COMBAT BATMAN'S NIGHT-FIGHTING ABILITY!...

FROM NOW ON OUR VAULT-HEISTS WILL BE CARRIED OUT *UNDETECTED!* NO ONE--NOT EVEN THE *MASKED MAN-HUNTER*--WILL BE ABLE TO SPOT US!

BECAUSE UNLIKE US--*BATMAN* CAN'T *SEE* IN PITCH-BLACKNESS!

WITH OUR "*LIGHT-INTENSIFIER*" GOGGLES, THE DARKEST OBJECTS LOOK BRIGHT AS DAY!

AND WITH THESE FOAM-SOLED SHOES, NOT EVEN A MOUSE COULD *HEAR* US!

THE WALL TO THE GEM-VAULT ROOM SHOULD BE RIGHT HERE, ACCORDING TO THIS UNDER-GROUND PLAN! READS JUST LIKE I HAD A *SPOTLIGHT* ON IT!

HAND ME THE *ULTRA-SONIC* CUTTING TOOL--NOBODY CAN *HEAR* THAT EITHER!

AR3

HERE, BOSS...

WHAT WAS *THAT*? THOUGHT I HEARD SOME-THING...

MUST'VE BEEN A SEWER-RAT... HEY! CLUMSY!

SORRY, BOSS... THOUGHT YOU HAD IT!

CLANGGGGGGGG

AND EVEN BEFORE THE ECHOING SOUND DIES OUT...

YOU'VE HAD IT ALL RIGHT!

THE BATMAN?! HE HEARD...

AS THE CAPED CRUSADER LANDS IN THE STYGIAN DARKNESS, A WELL-REHEARSED ESCAPE PLAN GOES INTO SILENT, SMOOTH OPERATION!...

BATMAN WON'T DARE SHINE A LIGHT... OR HE BECOMES THE TARGET!

INSTANTLY USING HIS FINELY ATTUNED HEARING, THE GOTHAM GANGBUSTER SWINGS INTO ACTION...

ONLY THE FAINTEST RUSTLE OF CLOTHING-- BUT THEY'RE EVADING ME LIKE THEY CAN SEE!

AS THE LAST OF THE THUGS FLITS PAST...

BATMAN... BLIND AS A BAT! CAN'T RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO--

BUT, DEFTLY ROLLING WITH THE PUNCH...

ALL I NEEDED... SOME CONTACT TO LATCH ON TO!

3

INSTANTLY REGRETTING HIS RASHNESS, HIS PREY PULLS AWAY... BECOMING A MOVING TARGET!...

DARN! COULDN'T CONNECT SOLID!

BOK

RIP

MOMENTS LATER, LEFT ALONE WITH AN EMPTY SLEEVE...

OUTMANEUVERED BY... SHADOWS! MUST'VE BEEN USING SOME SOPHISTICATED ELECTRONIC SEEING-AID...

THIS MONKEY HAD TO SEE WHAT HE WAS AIMING AT--ME!

NO RISK NOW IN THROWING LIGHT ON THE SITUATION! MAY FIND SOME CLUE...

THERE'S SOMETHING... PROBABLY WHAT CAUSED THE RACKET THAT ALERTED ME!

AN ULTRA-SONIC CUTTING TOOL! CAN ZIP THROUGH CONCRETE AND METAL LIKE CHEESE...

...WITHOUT EMITTING A SOUND THE HUMAN EAR CAN DETECT!

WHILE EXITING IN A REMOTE, DESERTED AREA...

ONE STUPID SLIP-UP IN A PERFECT SET-UP ALMOST FINISHED US! FROM NOW ON... ALL TOOLS ARE PADDED, DIG?

TOUGH WE HAD TO LOSE THAT ULTRA-SONIC TOOL!

IT'S MORE THAN TOUGH...'CAUSE BY NOW BATMAN'S FOUND IT! IF WE USE ANOTHER ONE, HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO TRACK US DOWN...

...BY USING A DETECTOR TUNED TO ITS OPERATING FREQUENCY!

4

THEN HE'S GOT US STYMIED, BOSS! WE CAN'T PULL ANOTHER "BLACKOUT" JOB WITHOUT THAT *SILENT* GIZMO!

NOT UNLESS WE USE IT AS A *WEAPON* AGAINST THAT SNOOPER! WHICH WE *WILL*... TO *LURE* HIM INTO A *TRAP*.. WHERE WE'LL BE READY FOR *ANY* COUNTER-MOVE HE MAKES!

LIKE *WHEN*? *WHERE*?

TOMORROW NIGHT... *THERE*! THE *NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM*... ITS *GEM* COLLECTION IS IN A *WINDOWLESS* HALL! AND WHEN THE LIGHTS ARE SWITCHED OFF...

...*PITCH-BLACKNESS*! THEN WE SWITCH ON *BATMAN'S* HOMING SIGNAL, OUR *ULTRA-S* CUTTER, AND...

WHILE IN THE DEPTHS OF THE OUT-WARDLY BLACKED-OUT MUSEUM...

THAT DOES IT...THE LAST OF A SERIES OF EVER-INCREASING DOSES OF GLAND-EXTRACT! AND NOW, MY LEATHERY-WINGED FRIEND, WE WAIT THE FIRST SIGNS OF INCREASED SENSITIVITY TO *MINUTE SOUNDS*...

...THE FIRST NECESSITY FOR NATURAL SONAR-DETECTION...

ARGHH-H! THAT NOISE-- *UNBEARABLE*!

PLIP

PLIP

PLIP

PLIP

AND... MY *EYES*! CAN'T STAND THAT *BLAZING LIGHT*!

SWITCHING OFF THE OFFENDING LIGHT, LANGSTROM HEADS UNERRINGLY ACROSS THE CLUTTERED LAB TO THE CLOSET!...

SUNGLASSES IN MY JACKET... MUST GET THEM!

6

THEN, A SUDDEN DAWNING REALIZATION...

GOOD LORD! I NAVIGATED IN UTTER BLACKNESS WITHOUT BUMPING INTO ANYTHING!

MY VOCAL CORDS MUST'VE BEEN EMITTING SUPER-SONIC SIGNALS!

MY ULTRA-SENSITIVE HEARING PICKED UP THE BOUNCE-BACK ECHOES, GUIDING ME TO MY TARGET LIKE A HOMING MISSILE!

I'VE DONE IT! I NOW POSSESS A BAT'S NATURAL SONAR!

BUT... NORMAL SOUNDS CAN DRIVE ME CRAZY! HAVE TO DULL THEM...

THESE WAX EAR-PLUGS WILL DO TILL I CAN GET BETTER ONES!

WHILE IN HIS SECRET LAB ATOP THE WAYNE FOUNDATION, BATMAN WORKS FEVERISHLY TO INCREASE HIS HEARING SENSITIVITY...

SINCE I'M A BATMAN IN NAME ONLY, I NEED AN ARTIFICIAL AID TO FIND MY TARGETS QUICKLY IN THE DARK!

THESE STEREO-LOCATER EAR-PLUGS SHOULD DO THE JOB, ALFRED!

WORKING DEEP INTO THE NIGHT, THE CAPED CRUSADER FINALLY REACHES THE TEST STAGE...

WILL THIS OUTFIT DO, SIR?

FINE! TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES...

AND MOVE AS SILENTLY AS POSSIBLE INTO THE DARK, CARPETED LIVING ROOM!

AND NOW, AS I PLUNGE EVERYTHING INTO DARKNESS... WE PLAY HIDE-AND-SEEK!

6

IN A BRIEF BATTLE OF WITS, BOTH MEN MAKE NO MOVEMENT TO BETRAY THEIR LOCATION... UNTIL LIKE A POUNCING CAT...

I SAY, SIR... HOW DID YOU *EVER?* I EVEN HELD MY *BREATH...*

AS THE LIGHTS ARE PUT ON AGAIN...

BUT ONE THING YOU *COULDN'T* DO! STOP YOUR...

...*HEARTBEATS!* MINE, LOUDER... AND YOURS, FAINTER!

BOOM

BOOM

BOOM

BOOM

NOW I'M SET TO COPE WITH THIS "*BLACKOUT*" GANG... SOON AS I ANALYZE THE OPERATING FREQUENCY OF THIS *ULTRA-SONIC* CUTTER, AND RIG UP A LOCATION-FINDER!

WHILE AT THE MUSEUM, A MAN FLUSHED WITH SUCCESS BUT WEARIED BY HIS TRYING BREAK-THROUGH...

ENOUGH FOR NOW! I MUST GET HOME TO BED...

W-WHAT'S-- THIS?!

MY *HANDS!* THEY'RE... THEY'RE GROWING *HAIRY* LIKE... LIKE A *BAT!* EVEN GETTING *CLAW-LIKE!*

OHH... *NO!* A *SECONDARY* CHARACTERISTIC OF THE GLAND-EXTRACT? MUST HIDE THEM...

7

IT'S ONLY *TEMPORARY*... *HAS* TO BE!

MY--MY HAT! *WHAT* PUSHED IT OFF?

IN SILENT, GNAWING ANGUISH, THE DELVER INTO THE UNKNOWN RUSHES WILDLY ACROSS THE ROOM...

AND THEN, IN ONE REELING MOMENT OF HORROR-STRUCK REALIZATION... THE IMMENSITY OF HIS "ACHIEVEMENT" IS REVEALED TO HIM!

I'M... *GAHRRR* ... BECOMING A...

...MAN-BAT!

8

IT'S... SOME UGLY *NIGHTMARE!* THE GLAND-EXTRACT MUST BE CAUSING *HALLUCINATIONS!*

I...I *CAN'T* BE TURNING INTO...

ARGH-H-H... SKREEK! SKREEK! I...AM!

I MUST FIND AN *ANTIDOTE!*

BUT... *WHAT?*

STAY AWAY FROM ME...YOU FURRY LITTLE MONSTER! I... I'M *NOT* ONE OF YOU!

SHREEK SHREEK

CAN'T LEAVE HERE... LIKE *THIS!* MUST GO INTO HIDING 'TIL I CAN CHANGE THE COURSE OF THIS EVIL MUTATION!

NO ONE MUST *SEARCH* FOR ME... *NO ONE!*

9

NEXT MORNING, A TELEGRAM DELIVERY TO THE CURATOR OF THE GOTHAM MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY...

"MOTHER SERIOUSLY ILL... STOP... MUST FLY TO CHICAGO... STOP.. DON'T WORRY... EXHIBIT WILL BE FINISHED IN TIME FOR OPENING... LANGSTROM"

DON'T WORRY?

WHO ELSE COULD COMPLETE THIS AUTHENTIC BAT-HABITAT LIKE LANGSTROM?

HE'D BETTER RETURN IN TIME...

WHILE UNNOTICED ABOVE, AMONG NIGHT-CREATURES WHO SLEEP BY DAY... AND HUNT BY NIGHT...

AS THE LONG DAY PASSES AND THE MUSEUM SLEEPS AGAIN, AN EMOTIONALLY EXHAUSTED MAN-BAT WAKES, UNREFRESHED...

SKREEK... YAWN! DREAMED SUCH GRUESOME TORTURED THINGS-- THAT I WAS REALLY A... UGH... BAT,' AND SLEEPING HANGING UPSIDE-DOWN...

NO DREAM... GASP... NO DREAM! I AM UP HERE... AMONG THEM! AND... AND THE FANTASTIC STRENGTH MY HANDS NOW POSSESS...!

10

I'M HUNGRY...RAVENOUSLY HUNGRY! THE MUSEUM CAFETERIA...THROUGH THE GEM COLLECTION!

WHILE IN THE TOTALLY BLACKED-OUT GEM HALL...

IDEAL, EH, BOYS? THE PERFECT CONDITIONS TO FINALLY END THE CAREER OF THAT PHONEY MASTER OF DARKNESS-- BATMAN!

NOW--SWITCH ON THE ULTRA-S CUTTER AND BEAM HIM IN!

THE BLACKOUT GANG'S BACK IN OPERATION! ONLY THIS TIME I ZERO IN AND CATCH THEM FLAT-FOOTED!

BEEP BEEP BEEP

HE'S COMING-- FREEZE! NOT A PEEP OUT OF ANYONE-- WANT TO TEST IF HE DEVELOPED A COUNTERATTACK!

DIG THIS EXPERIMENTAL CAR AN ADVANCED-THINKING MANUFACTURER OFFERED TO BATMAN FOR TESTING!

WITH THE SURENESS OF A NIGHT-CREATURE, THE MASKED CRIME-CRUSADER LEAPS INTO THE VELVETY BLACKNESS!

I CAN'T SEE YOU... BUT I KNOW YOU'RE HERE! SURRENDER... BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

REPEAT... SURRENDER BEFORE I...

HA! WANTS TO BAIT US INTO REVEALING OUR POSITIONS BY ANSWERING! HE'S BLIND AS A BAT!

YOU'RE THINKING I CAN'T SEE YOU, BUT...

I CAN HEAR YOUR HEARTBEATS!

CHONK

BOOMP BOOMP BOOMP

NEXT MOMENT, THE BLACKOUT-GANG LEADER SPRINGS HIS COUNTERATTACK...

PING-PONG BALLS!

FIGURED HE MIGHT USE SOME KIND OF SONAR-DETECTOR!

AMPLIFIED BY HIS OVER-SENSITIVE HEARING-AIDS, THE CASCADING BALLS ECHO AND RE-ECHO DEAFENINGLY IN THE BATMAN'S HEAD--MASKING ALL OTHER SOUNDS!...

I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING ELSE! CAN'T FOLLOW THEIR MOVEMENTS...!

BONK BONK BONK

BONK

BONK BONK BONK BONK

12

AS THE BOUNCING, CAROMING PING-PONG BALLS CONTINUE THEIR BEWILDERING CACOPHONY...

HE CAN'T TRACK US ANYMORE-- SO LET'S *HELP* HIM *FIND* US!

I'LL TAKE IT ON THESE BLIND TERMS, ANYTHING THAT HITS ME--*I* CAN HIT!

BUT EVEN FOR THE MIGHTY *BATMAN* THESE ODDS PROVE *TOO* GREAT!

NOW THAT HE'S HELPLESS...I'LL *FINISH* HIM!

BUT *SUDDENLY*, FROM OUT OF THE BLACKNESS OF THE HUSHED HALL...

SCREE

SCREEEEE

WHA--? *ARGH-H--* IT'S... THE MOST HORRIBLE *THING* I'VE EVER SEEN!

13

I WISH I COULDN'T SEE IT!

PHWHAM

SKREEEE

KRASH

IF--IF I DON'T STOP THIS THING... IT'LL KILL US ALL!

NOTHING THIS ULTRA-S CAN'T CUT THROUGH-- EVEN THIS MONSTROUS MAN-BAT--

BOK

--IF THERE WEREN'T A BAT-MAN STILL ALIVE TO STOP YOU, PUNK!

14

A *BATMAN* WHO NEEDED A BREATHER! AND NOW THAT I'VE HAD IT... *YOU'VE HAD IT!*

THEN, JOINING HIS STRANGE COUNTERPART--BOTH BROTHERS-UNDER-THE-SKIN FINISH OFF THEIR ENEMIES... TOGETHER!

GLAD TO HAVE YOU ON THE TEAM, FELLA...

IT'S... *SKREEK...* WHAT I'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF, *BATMAN!*

AND WHEN THE THUGS ARE BATTED DOWN...

SKREEK... YOU ALL RIGHT, *BATMAN?*

SURE, STRANGER... THANKS TO YOU!

THAT'S *ALL* THAT MATTERS! *SKREEK...I* MUST GO NOW!

WHAT'S YOUR HURRY? FOR A GUY I OWE SO MUCH TO... YOU'RE AN AWFULLY MODEST HERO!

AT LEAST LET ME SEE *WHO* I OWE MY THANKS TO...

SKREEK! YOU DON'T WANT TO *SEE... NO ONE* SHOULD!

IT WAS *YOUR* INSPIRATION ...*YOUR* GREAT FIGHT AGAINST CRIMINALS OF THE NIGHT--THAT BROUGHT *THIS* ON ME!

THEN IF I WAS *YOUR* HERO... WHY *HIDE* FROM *ME--?*

ALL RIGHT... *SEE!!*

15

MAN--! YOU'RE EVEN MORE A "BAT" THAN I EVER WAS!

AND WITH YOUR ADDED ABILITY TO "SEE" IN THE DARK-- YOU'VE TOPPED ME! WHAT AN AWE-INSPIRING DISGUISE!

SKREEK...

DISGUISE?

DISGUISE...?

:SOB: I ONLY WISH IT, WERE!

I--SKREEK-- I'VE SUCCEEDED ONLY TOO WELL!

OBVIOUSLY HE DOESN'T WANT ME TO FOLLOW HIM... AND I OWE HIM AT LEAST THAT!

BUT HE WOULD MAKE A FORMIDABLE FRIEND!...

OR... FOE?

16

WHICH WILL IT BE? IN WHICH ROLE WILL THE MAN-BAT RE-ENTER THE BATMAN'S LIFE?

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE MAN-BAT IN A FORTHCOMING ISSUE OF DETECTIVE COMICS!

FOR A BRIEF FLASHING! FOR A BRIEF FLASHING! FOR A BRIEF FLASHING!

SUPERMAN
DC
NATIONAL COMICS

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

AUG.
NO. 402

Detective Comics presents BATMAN and ROBIN

"MAN OR BAT!"

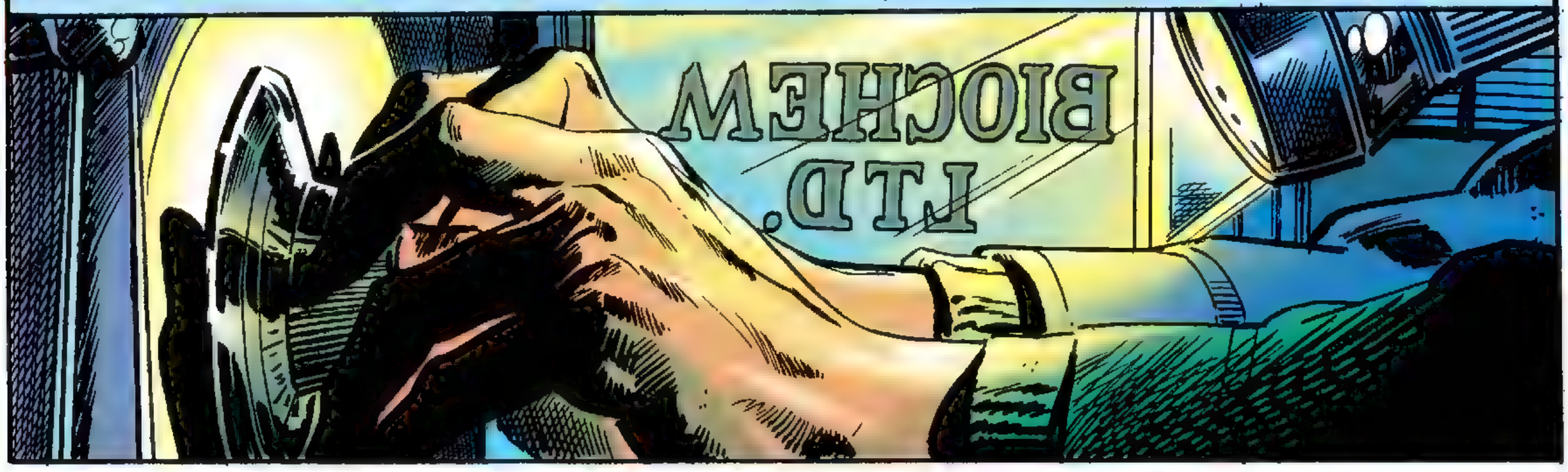
S 478

STORY BY: FRANK ROBBINS

MAN OR BAT?

ART BY: NEAL ADAMS & DICK GIORDANO

GOTHAM CITY... IN THE LAB OFFICE OF BIOCHEM, LTD., WHOLESALER OF RARE BIOCHEMICALS...



...WHERE AN INTENT HEIST-GANG WORKS, UNAWARE OF A SILENT WATCHER, HANGING POISED ABOVE THEM...

TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR ME! WHAT'S TAKING THEM SO BLASTED LONG?

I NEED ONE ITEM IN THAT SAFE MORE THAN THEY DO!

AH-H-H-- THEY'VE CRACKED IT! NOW TO MAKE A GRAND-ENTRANCE LIKE MY IDOL-- THE BATMAN-- AND SCARE THEM OFF-- EH?!

T-THE BATMAN!

WHY DID THIS HAVE TO HAPPEN NOW? NOW-- OF ALL TIMES?

SO NEAR--AND I CAN'T TOUCH IT! BUT I MUST HAVE IT...!

GOT HIM TIED UP, BOYS... LET HIM HAVE IT!

JUST HOLD HIM STEAD-- YAH-H! ANOTHER BATMAN?!

SKRE-EK!

PLAM

ANOTHER...? SKREEK! SKREEK! THERE IS--ONLY-- ONE--BATMAN!

2

MY MYSTERIOUS ALLY FROM THE *MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY* CAPER*! HE'S COME TO HELP ME *AGAIN!*

NOT THAT I WAS IN REAL TROUBLE, FRIEND-- BUT YOU SURE HELPED MAKE IT SHORT AND SWEET!

*SKREEK! IT WAS IN MY OWN SELFISH INTERESTS TO END IT *QUICKLY, BATMAN*--BECAUSE...

*"CHALLENGE OF THE MAN-BAT!" in: *DETECTIVE COMICS #400*

...THERE'S SOMETHING IN THAT SAFE *I MUST* HAVE--*FAST!*

HOLD IT! WE JUST FOUGHT TO *PREVENT* A THEFT...AND UNTIL I GET THE POLICE HERE, *NOTHING* IS TOUCHED!

YOU DON'T *UNDERSTAND!* I CAN'T-- *WAIT! NO ONE* STOPS ME...

...NOT EVEN *YOU, BATMAN!*

*SKREEK! I'M NO THIEF--LIKE THOSE RATS! *SEE*... I'M PREPARED TO *PAY* FOR WHAT *I* TAKE!

SO YOU ARE! BUT THIS IS *AFTER* BUSINESS HOURS... AND NO WAY TO *"BUY"* A MEDICAL PRODUCT!

SKREEK--DON'T FORCE ME INTO BEING YOUR-- *ENEMY!* PLEASE...

3

NO SALE! WE CLOSE THIS UP TILL THE OWNER TAKES INVENTORY!

SKREEK! I-- WARNED YOU!

BOMP

FORGIVE ME...

PERHAPS IF YOU'RE UNMASKED... YOU'LL COME TO YOUR SENSES!

SKREEEEEEK!

GOOD GOD! IT'S... REAL! NO... NO DISGUISE!

YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE ME... SKREEK... LAST TIME WE MET?

HIS MIND REELING, FOR A BRIEF FLASH THE BATMAN HAS A SUBLIMINAL RECALL...

WHAT AN AWE-INSPIRING DISGUISE!

SKREEEK-- DISGUISE? DISGUISE..? :SOB: I ONLY WISH IT WERE!

BUT THAT FLEETING INSTANT IS ALL THE DISTRAUGHT MAN-BAT NEEDS...

NOW... NOW YOU KNOW! B-BUT :SOB: I DIDN'T WANT TO TURN INTO THIS!

4

I'M SOB SORRY, BATMAN! BUT I MUST REGAIN THE ME THAT WAS-- AT ANY COST!

STILL--CAN'T LET YOU-- STEAL...

WATCH IT--

OHH--

KWONK

PULSE NORMAL-- THANK GOD! BATMAN WILL LIVE--BUT WILL I?

MINUTES LATER, A FEAR-HAUNTED TRAVESTY OF A MAN SPEEDS TOWARD HIS HAVEN-- GOTHAM'S MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY...

LUCKY BATMAN--HIS APPEARANCE IS ONLY A DISGUISE! BUT MY MUTATION INTO A HUMAN BAT GOES ON-- UNCHECKED!

THEN, LETTING HIMSELF IN WITH A KEY...

IF I CAN'T REVERSE THE UGLY PROCESS...

KIRK LANGSTROM, EMINENT NOCTURNAL-MAMMAL EXPERT-- DIES!

PERSONNEL ENTRANCE ONLY

AND AN UNPREDICTABLE CREATURE OF THE NIGHT IS BORN!

5

WHILE A MAN IN THE GUISE OF A BAT--BUT NEVER IN DANGER OF LOSING HIS HUMAN IDENTITY--COMES TO HIS SENSES!

WHAT TERRIBLE INNER CONFLICT TORTURES THAT-- CREATURE?

IS HE A HUMAN BAT-- OR A BAT WITH HUMAN TRAITS?

SPEEDING AWAY AFTER NOTIFYING THE POLICE TO PICK UP THE HEIST GANG...

HE SAID HE'D PAY FOR WHATEVER HE TOOK! BUT WHAT WAS IT?

AND HOW CAN IT SAVE HIM?

I ONCE SAID HE'D MAKE A FORMIDABLE FRIEND-- OR FOE! IS THIS TO BE THE DECISIVE HOUR-- WHEN IT CAN GO EITHER WAY?

I MUST FIND HIM! PERHAPS IN THE MUSEUM, WHERE I FIRST MET HIM?

AT BATMAN'S DESTINATION, ANOTHER SEEKS ENTRANCE...

YOU MUST LET ME IN! I'M HIS FIANCÉE, FRANCINE LEE--I MUST SEE HIM!

I DUNNO, MISS-- HE'S THE ONLY ONE PERMITTED IN AFTER HOURS! --EH? BATMAN-- HERE?

BATMAN? OH, THANK HEAVEN-- MAYBE YOU CAN HELP ME!

WHO CAN'T SHE SEE?

PROF. LANGSTROM-- OUR... ER... BAT-SPECIALIST! HE'S BUSY PREPARING AN EXHIBIT, AFTER A RUSH TRIP TO CHICAGO!

BUT--THAT'S THE POINT! KIRK NEVER WENT TO CHICAGO! I PHONED HIS MOTHER! SHE ISN'T SICK AT ALL! AND HE HASN'T BEEN HOME HERE, IN DAYS!

HMMM... SOUNDS LIKE AN ELABORATE COVER-UP, MISS LEE! AND I'M AFRAID I KNOW WHY! COME ON...

6

WHILE IN AN UPSTAIRS SECLUDED LAB ADJOINING THE BAT-EXHIBIT HALL...

NOW--THE *MOMENT OF TRUTH!* WILL THIS RARE COMPOUND DO WHAT IT'S FORMULATED TO DO?

SUDDENLY, HIS BAT SENSITIZED HEARING DETECTS FAINT SOUNDS...

FOOTSTEPS! ONE--A WOMAN'S!

SKREEEEK!

EEEEEEE! WHO--*WHAT* IS *THAT?* WHERE IS *KIRK?* WHAT'VE YOU *DONE* WITH HIM?

JUST AS I FEARED--BRACE YOURSELF, MISS LEE! *"THAT"* IS...

YOUR FIANCÉ--*KIRK LANGSTROM!*

A THREE-STORY DROP! HE'LL BE KILLED...

7

BUT ALMOST AS IF ON WINGS...

HE-HE'S ALIVE! BUT--HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE IT--HE'S--KIRK?

CONTINUING HIS HEADLONG FLIGHT, THE MAN-BAT SEEKS THE SHELTERING GLOOM OF GOTHAM'S CENTRAL PARK!

MY ONLY REFUGE-- MY ONE CHANCE AT NORMALCY-- DESTROYED!

CURSE BATMAN!

WHEN HE FIRST SAW YOU, HIS VOCAL CORDS FROZE...BUT HIS SAD, CONTORTED MOUTH FORMED ONE WORD THAT I LIP-READ... "FRANCIE!"

ONE FINAL CLINCHER CONVINCED ME, FRANCINE!

THIS SYNTHESIZED BIOCHEMICAL--I RECOGNIZE IT! A COUNTER-ACTIVE GRAND STIMULANT-- AND BIOCHEM, LTD. IS THE ONLY SOURCE FOR IT IN THE U.S.A.!

BUT I HAVE THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR COMPOUNDING IT--IN MY BATCAVE!

IF I CAN ONLY FIND KIRK IN TIME!

8

SKREEK! SKREEK! WHERE CAN I HIDE NOW-- WHERE CAN I FIND ANOTHER SOURCE FOR RECIDIVISM...

...BEFORE THE MUTATION PROCESS IS-- IRREVERS-IBLE?

RIP

WHERE DO I GO...WITH TIME RUNNING OUT SO FAST? WITH EVERY PASSING MOMENT I FEEL NEW CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN MY BODY!

LANGSTROM! COME DOWN-- DON'T DO ANYTHING FOOLISH!

SKREEK!

SKREEK! BATMAN'S FOUND ME-- SO SOON!?

EVEN HE HAS A HOME TO GO TO! IF ONLY I COULD FLY AND FOLLOW HIM...

RIGHT NOW I'D RATHER BE HIM THAN ME!

COME DOWN, LANGSTROM! I WANT TO HELP YOU...

SKREEK!! YOU--BATMAN, HELP ME?

HAR!!

ALSO REALIZING HIS IMMEDIATE PERIL, THE **MAN-BAT** FRANTICALLY FLAPS HIS... **ARMS**?

SKREEK! W-WHAT...?

BUT ARE THEY **ONLY** "ARMS" NOW?

SKREE-EEK! BAT-WINGS...?!

THE TRANSFORMATION IS =UGH= **COMPLETE!**

THE FEAR-DRIVEN FOOL! EVEN HIS CAPE WON'T SLOW THAT HEAD-LONG ESCAPE-PLUNGE...

HE'LL HIT THE WATER LIKE A *ROCK!*

BUT NOW--I'M *FREE!* FREE LIKE MY LITTLE *"BROTHER"*...

...WHO WILL NOW SHARE HIS HIDEAWAY WITH *ME!*

=GASP=

KIRK'S MONSTROUS MUTATION IS FINALLY *COMPLETED!* MAYBE EVEN **I** CAN'T SAVE HIM NOW!

10

KIRK--? YOU DIDN'T STOP HIM?

NO ONE MAN COULD, I'M AFRAID, FRANCIE! IT'S GONE ALL THE WAY NOW...

BATMAN TO ALL POLICE! I WANT AN ALL-POINTS BULLETIN OL'T FOR--YOU WON'T BELIEVE THIS, BUT...

HE'S SLOWING DOWN--MUST BE ZEROING IN ON HIS HIDDEN HOME!

NO CHURCH STEEPLE NEAR--IS IT A CAVE?

THEN, AS THE SONAR-GUIDED CREATURE UNERRINGLY DIVES FOR A PRACTICALLY UNSEEN CREVICE...

SKREEK! SKREEK!

FRANTICALLY, THE GIANT MAN-BAT CLAWS AT THE NARROW WALLS--FIGHTING TO FORCE HIS CLUMSY HULK INSIDE...

MUST GET IN! MUST...

FINALLY, HIS CLAWED FINGERS TORN AND BLEEDING, HE COLLAPSES EXHAUSTED, INSIDE...

MADE IT! MIND REELING--BUT...

I'VE FOUND MY TRUE HOME AT LAST!

HE'S FOUND THE ENTRANCE! OH--NO! IT'S TOO SMALL FOR ME TO ENTER!

11

WHERE AM I? THIS IS NO ORDINARY CAVE...

SKREEK! THIS COULD ONLY BE-- THE BATMAN'S HOME... THE BATCAVE!

SUDDENLY...*

ARGH-H...!

*OUTSIDE, BATMAN PRESSES THE DASHBOARD BUTTON THAT ACTIVATES THE CAMOUFLAGED CAVE-DOOR... AND THE INSIDE LIGHTS...

GOOD OLD BATCAVE! NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE NEEDING YOU SO SOON! BUT MUST HAVE THAT FORMULA READY-- WHEN THE POLICE GRAB LANGSTROM!

TEMPORARILY BLINDED, A FRANTIC MAN-BAT SEARCHES MADLY FOR HIS ONLY KNOWN ESCAPE ROUTE...

HAS TO BE-- BATMAN RETURNING!

I'VE LOST MY BEARINGS! WHERE IS THAT EXIT?

NOCTURNAL FOOL! I'VE FORGOTTEN MY GREATEST ACQUIRED WEAPON FOR SURVIVAL--SONAR!

12

WHEN I DON'T GET A BOUNCE-BACK-- I'VE FOUND MY EXIT!

SKRE SKREE

EK EEk

SKREEK

MORE BLINDING LIGHTS--BUT NO ECHO! I'VE FOUND IT!

IT'S--LANGSTROM! HIDING HERE...?!

SEEMS BLINDED! HE'LL DASH HIMSELF RIGHT INTO MY CAR...!

REACTING INSTINCTIVELY TO SAVE THE SIGHTLESS CREATURE, HE JAMS ON THE BRAKES--AND LEAPS OUT...

MUST DIVERT HIM...

BUT THE MAN-BAT'S NATURAL SONAR HAS ALREADY WARNED HIM--AND VEERING TO AVOID THE CAR, HE SMASHES INTO THE NEW OBSTACLE PUT SUDDENLY IN HIS PATH!...

OOO-F!

STUNNED BY THE MASSIVE IMPACT, BOTH FIGHT TO REGAIN THEIR SENSES--

HE'S STRUGGLING TO FREE HIMSELF-- LIKE A TERRIFIED, CORNERED-- ANIMAL!

YARGH-H! SKREEK!

LANGSTROM! LISTEN TO ME--I'VE COME HERE TO HELP YOU!

13

I CAN MAKE THE *ANTIDOTE* HERE--

SAVE YOU!

YARGH-H! SKREEK!

IT'S AS IF HE DOESN'T *UNDERSTAND* ME! HE ONLY WANTS *OUT!*

SKRE-EEK! SKRE-EEK!

SUDDENLY REVERSING HIS DIRECTION IN MID-AIR, THE *MAN-BAT* HEADS BACK INTO THE CAVE!...

YARGH-H SKRE-EEK! SKRE-EEK!

HAS HE LOST ORIENTATION--OR IS HE TRYING TO SHAKE *ME* OFF?

SKRE-EEK! SKRE-EEK!

HE'S FLYING *STRAIGHT UP* TO THE *ROOF--?!*

THOSE UNBELIEVABLY STRONG HANDS -- *BREAKING MY HOLD!*

14

YARK-K!

IN FREE-FALL TO INSTANT DEATH FAR BELOW, THE DESPERATE BATMAN CLUTCHES WILDLY ABOUT HIM... AND BREAKS HIS FALL ENOUGH TO...

THOMP

IF HE GETS AWAY NOW--HE'S DOOMED! MUST KEEP HIM HERE-- BUT HOW?

REMOTE CAR-CONTROL ON BELT! BRING CAR TO ME! THEN...

15

AS THE REMOTE-GUIDED CAR MOVES IN, THE AUTOMATIC DOOR SWIFTLY DESCENDS...TOO SWIFTLY FOR THE **MAN-BAT** TO CHECK HIS HEADLONG MOMENTUM!...

PHWA-M

GOOD LORD! I-I ONLY MEANT TO *TRAP* HIM IN HERE! N-NOT...

STILL BREATHING! BUT FOR HOW LONG?

IF HE SHOULD *LIVE*--AND HIS BRAIN IS **PERMANENTLY** DAMAGED--

WOULD IT BE MORE A *CURSE* THAN A **BLESSING**-- IF I RESTORED HIM TO **HUMAN** FORM...

...TO LIVE OUT HIS DAYS AS A **VEGETABLE?**

MERCIFUL HEAVEN--WHAT AN **IMPOSSIBLE** DECISION TO MAKE!

THERE CAN BE ONLY **ONE** ANSWER...

...IF HE **MUST** DIE...LET IT BE AS THE **MAN** HE ONCE WAS!

WHICH WILL IT BE--

MAN OR BAT

ONLY A FUTURE ISSUE OF *DETECTIVE COMICS* CAN TELL!

16

TION NEEDED!

AS I THOUGHT... HE'S TRYING FOR A QUICK EXIT!

UN MOMEN HOMBRE

HE PAYS US MANY PES TO RUIN THE WORK OF AMERICAN FILM-MAK

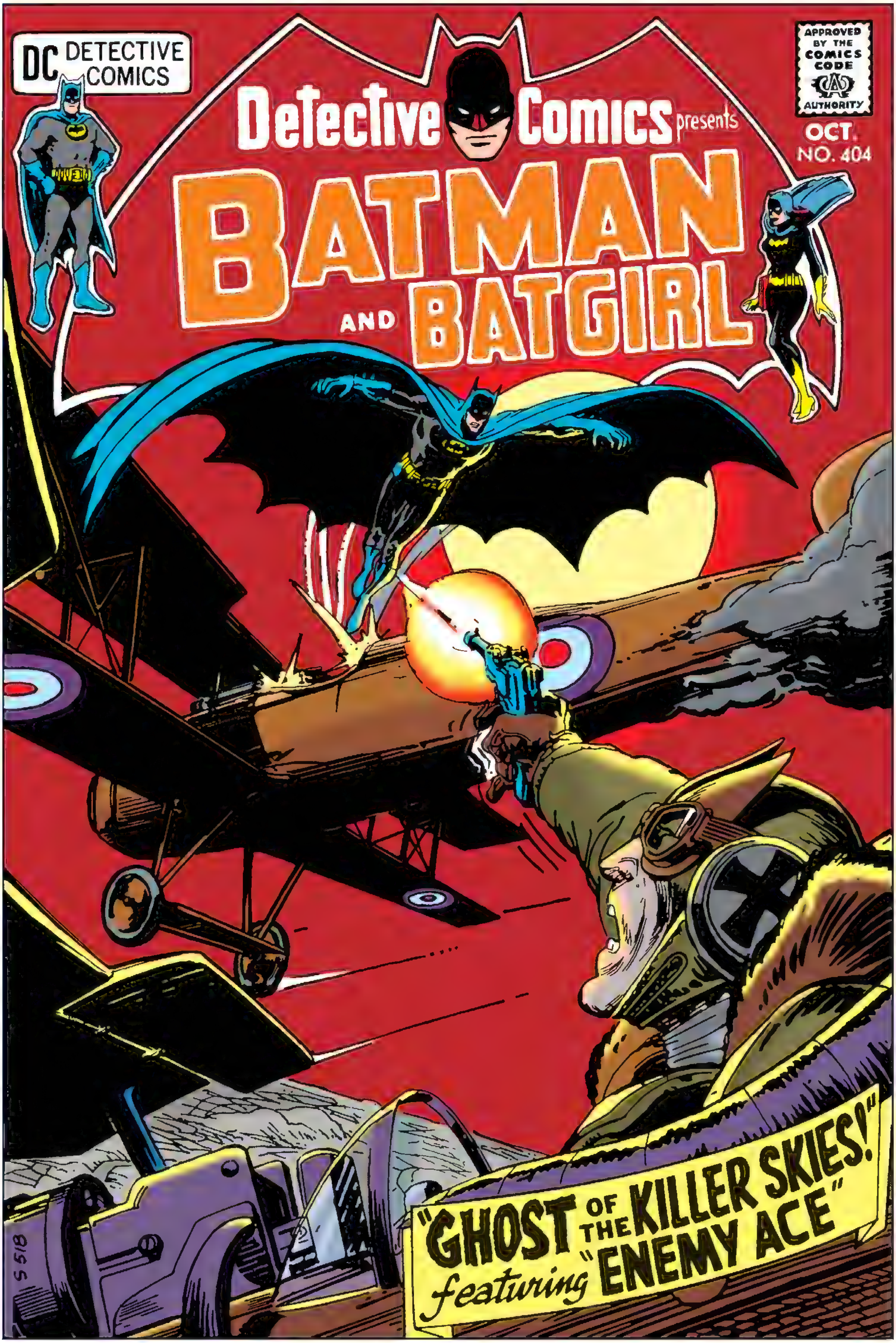
--BUT I *SWEAR* ON THE GRAVE OF MY MOTHER, I HAVE NOT HIS TRUE IDENTITY!

THIS I KNOW *NOT*, *MAN OF THE BATS!* ALWAYS, HE IS MASKED IN GOGGLES AND SCARF--EVEN AS *YOU* ARE MASKED! *

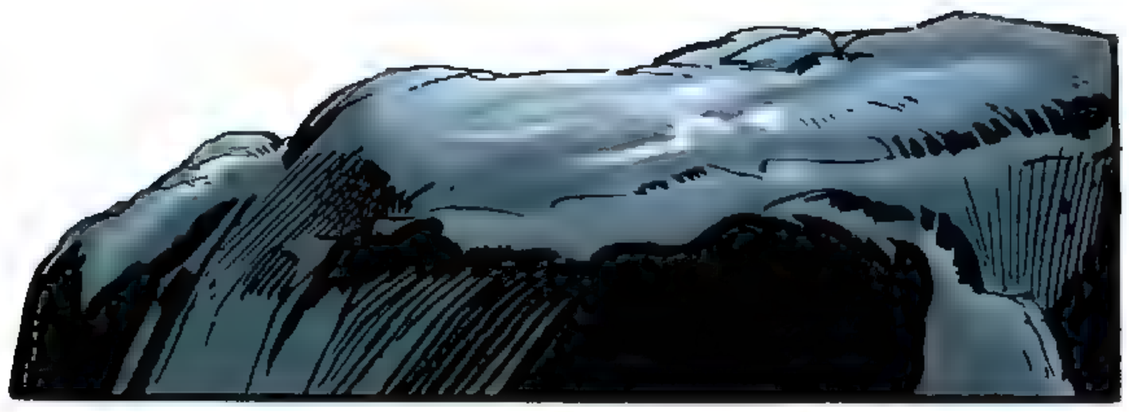
DID HE REQ YOU TO TAN WITH THE *AIRPLAN*

* TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH!

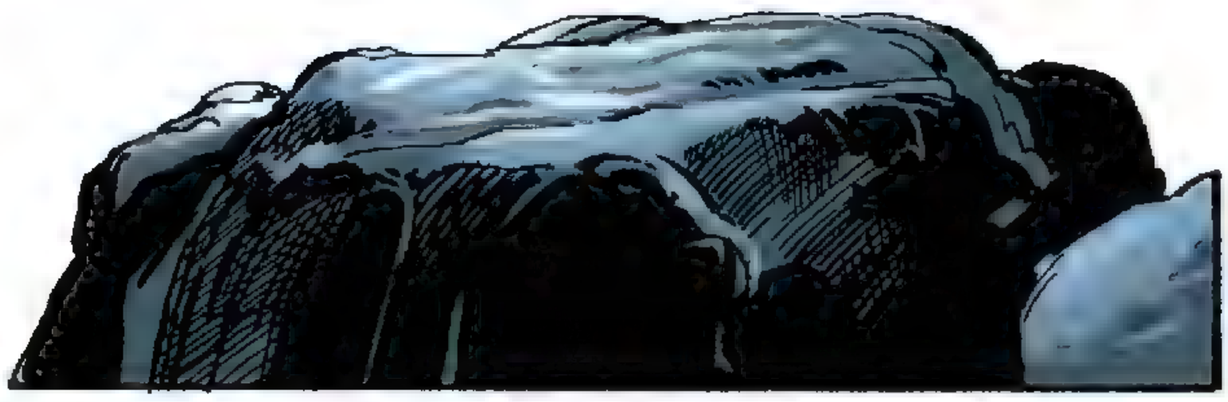
MOTIVE... OPPORTUN AND ONE VERY SLIP OF THE TONGUE--


DC DETECTIVE COMICS
Detective Comics presents
BATMAN AND BATGIRL
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
OCT.
NO. 404
"GHOST OF THE KILLER SKIES!" featuring "ENEMY ACE"

YOU ARE STANDING ON A WINDSWEPT CLIFF SOMEWHERE IN CENTRAL **SPAIN**, LOOKING THROUGH THE EYES OF A SOLITARY WATCHER... OBSERVING A SPECK OF AN AIR-CRAFT IN THE DISTANCE...



IT IS CLOSER, AND YOU HEAR ITS ENGINE SPUTTERING--YOU SEE THAT IT IS A FRENCH-MADE **NIEUPORT 17**-- A MOTORIZED KITE THAT WAS USED IN THE WORLD'S FIRST AIR-COMBAT IN 1916...



SUDDENLY IT FLIPS OVER AND HURLS TOWARD THE ROCKS BELOW YOU...AND YOU KNOW, WITH CHILL CERTAINTY, THAT YOU ARE WITNESSING A **MURDER**--

THE GROUND SHUDDERS AS THE PLANE SPLINTERS AGAINST THE CLIFF'S SNOWY FACE...

LEAVE, NOW THE EYES OF THE DREAD--

BATMAN

AND FOLLOW THE CAPED AVENGER THROUGH A TANGLE OF CRIME AND INTO THE BLEAKEST CORNER OF A MAN'S SOUL...A MAN WHO MUST BECOME...

"GHOST OF THE KILLER SKIES!"

SWIFT AS HIS FLYING NAME-SAKE, THE **BATMAN** SWOOPS TO THE BROKEN CRAFT...

...AND HEEDLESS OF PERSONAL DANGER, PULLS FROM THE WRECK A BROKEN, LIFELESS THING THAT HAD BEEN A MAN--

INCREDIBLE--! I **SAW** THERE'D BEEN FOUL PLAY... BUT NOT THE KIND I **THOUGHT!**

THE PILOT'S BEEN... **STRANGLED!** HE MUST HAVE BEEN DEAD **BEFORE** THE CRASH...

STRANGLED IN MID-AIR... IN A SINGLE-SEATER PLANE...

UP THERE, MR. ANSON!

YOU THINK I DON'T **KNOW**, BOOB? SO WE **CLIMB!**

THE **FILM CREW--!** IT WON'T DO TO LET THEM SEE **THE BATMAN** HERE IN **SPAIN**... AT LEAST NOT JUST **YET!**

LESS THAN A MINUTE LATER...

ARE YOU A **CAMERAMAN** OR A PIECE OF THE **SCENERY**, GAVIN? YOU GOT A **FIRE**, GET SOME **FOOTAGE** OF IT! MAYBE WE CAN **USE** A FIRE--!

CHECK, MR. ANSON!--ONLY I'M **SPOOKED--!** THE GUY'S BEEN **STRANGLED!**

DID SOMEONE SAY *DEAD?*

LIKE A DOORNAIL, MR. WAYNE!

BRUCE, BABY, WHAT THIS PICTURE IS...IS *JINXED!* THAT PILOT WAS ONE OF THE *FEW* LEFT WHO CAN FLY THOSE *WORLD WAR I* CRATES!

NOTHIN' BUT *TROUBLE* SINCE WE STARTED--! WE COME TO *SPAIN* 'CAUSE WE CAN MAKE IT *CHEAP* HERE, AND WHAT HAPPENS?

PROPS ARE MISSING... FILM-STOCK CATCHES FIRE...SOUND TRACKS GET ACCIDENTALLY ERASED...AND NOW *THIS!*

I'M READY TO *GIVE UP!*

PERHAPS WE SHOULD RETURN TO THE SET AND CALL A *MEETING!*

SHORTLY, ON THE MAIN SET OF THE MOVIE-IN-PROGRESS, TENTATIVELY TITLED "THE HAMMER OF HELL"...

YOU WANT *REASONS* WHY WE SHOULD PACK OUR BAGS AND SCOOT, I'LL GIVE 'EM, BRUCE!

NOT ONLY HAVE WE HAD SETBACKS WHICH *ALREADY* PUT US A LOT OVER OUR BUDGET, BUT I HEAR *ANOTHER* OUTFIT IS MAKIN' A GERMAN WAR PIC! IT'LL *KILL* OUR MARKET!

...BUT THE OTHER COMPANY DOESN'T HAVE A DIRECTOR LIKE YOU, ANSON-- A THREE-TIME ACADEMY AWARD WINNER...

AND...THEY AREN'T TELLING THE STORY OF *BARON HANS VON HAMMER* ...THE MOST ENIGMATIC FLYER WHO EVER LIVED!

I BELIEVE IN "THE HAMMER OF HELL"-- AND THE THINGS IT CAN SAY TO AUDIENCES ABOUT THE NATURE--AND FOLLY--OF WAR!

THAT'S WHY I PUT MONEY INTO IT...AND WHY I'LL CONTINUE TO FINANCE IT!

PARDON ME, PLEASE!

COME ON IN, FRANZ!

I HAVE HEAR ABOUT... ACCIDENT, NO? MY FELLOW PILOT KILLED?

MORE THAN KILLED... STRANGLED!

BRUCIE, MEET HEINRICH FRANZ --OUR TECHNICAL EXPERT! HEINRICH, THIS IS BRUCE WAYNE--ONE OF THE BANK-ROLLERS OF THIS MESS WE'RE WORKING ON!

YOU'VE DONE A FINE JOB KEEPING OUR ANTIQUES IN THE AIR, HERR FRANZ!

I AM SORRY FOR TROUBLES, MEIN HERR! PERHAPS WE ARE NOT FATED TO COMPLETE ZIS FILM, EH?

VON HAMMER VAS A GREAT BELIEVER IN FATE... THE DESTINY OF THE KILLER SKYS, HE CALLED IT!

PERHAPS... VON HAMMER'S GHOST IS OUR ENEMY, EH?

UMMM, WELL... I HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO!

MAYBE THE BATMAN CAN FIND THE ANSWER TO THAT...ON THE MOVIE SET!

4

AND SO, IN BRUCE WAYNE'S HOTEL ROOM...

I THOUGHT THERE WAS SOMETHING FAMILIAR ABOUT FRANZ... THE RESEMBLANCE IS UNCANNY!

HE LOOKS ALMOST EXACTLY LIKE THE MAN IN THIS OLD PHOTO... THE **REAL** BARON HANS VON HAMMER!

AS ALICE SAID, "CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER..!"

NIGHT, THICK AS A VELVET CLOAK, ENSHROUDS THE CARDBOARD AND CANVAS CASTLE, AND THE MAKE-SHIFT AIRFIELD WHICH LIES NEARBY...

HURRY... LIGHT THE FUSES AND *RUN--*

SI, SEÑOR HAMMER!

THEN YOU WILL GIVE US THE *PESOS* YOU *PROMISED, SEÑOR?*

SOMETHING MOVES IN THE DARKNESS!

USE YOUR *FLASH,* IDIOT!

*AIEEE! EL HOMBRE MURCIELAGO!**

MY ASKING YOU TO SURRENDER-- IN ENGLISH OR SPANISH-- WOULD DOUBTLESSLY FALL ON DEAF EARS-- SO...

* TRANS: LITERALLY, *THE BATMAN!*

MARTINEZ... THE FUSE! DESTROY THE PLANES!

SÍ, SEÑOR HAMMER!

AND I SHALL PLACE MY BLADE IN THIS... THIS MONSTER!

UGGNH

HE MOVES SWIFTLY AS THE SHARK--!

NO... MORE SWIFTLY THAN A SHARK, THIS RELENTLESSLY TRAINED BODY, POWERED BY UNQUENCHABLE WILL... STRIKES--

...AND STRIKES AGAIN, WITH DEVASTATING PRECISION...

FOR THIS IS THE BATMAN... ONE WHO KNOWS A SPECIAL SORT OF GREATNESS!

6

AT LEAST *TWO* OF MY PLAYMATES WERE HIT HARD ENOUGH TO STAY COOLED--

--BUT THAT *THIRD* ONE MIGHT STILL BE UP TO ANOTHER ROUND--

--COULDN'T GIVE BOTH HIM *AND* THE EXPLOSIVE ATTENTION BOTH NEEDED!

AS I THOUGHT... HE'S TRYING FOR A QUICK *EXIT!*

HE RUNS LIKE A REJECT FROM AN *OLD FOLKS* HOME--

UN MOMENTO, HOMBRECITO!

DEAR FRIEND, IF YOU VALUE YOUR FINE TEETH, YOU WILL SPEAK OF THE MAN WHO HIRED YOU TO DO EVIL THINGS! HIS *NAME,* OR--*

THIS I KNOW *NOT, MAN OF THE BATS!* ALWAYS, HE IS MASKED IN GOGGLES AND SCARF--EVEN AS *YOU* ARE MASKED! *

*TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH!

HE PAYS US MANY *PESOS* TO RUIN THE WORK OF THE AMERICAN FILM-MAKERS--

--BUT I *SWEAR* ON THE GRAVE OF MY MOTHER, I HAVE NOT HIS TRUE IDENTITY!

DID HE REQUIRE YOU TO TAMPER WITH THE *AIRPLANE?*

THIS WE DID *NOT* DO...

I CHOOSE TO *BELIEVE* YOU--FOR THE MOMENT! GO... SEEK A POLICEMAN AND SURRENDER YOURSELF AND YOUR COMPANIONS!

SHOULD YOU ATTEMPT TO *FLEE,* I WILL HUNT YOU THOUGH YOU HIDE AT THE END OF THE EARTH!

MOTIVE... OPPORTUNITY... AND ONE VERY *BAD* SLIP OF THE TONGUE--

IT'S GOT TO BE *HIM* MASQUERADING AS "VON HAMMER"--

7

SO, *THE BATMAN* IS CERTAIN HE HAS SOLVED THE MYSTERY! ARE *YOU* AS CERTAIN...?

I HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING EXACTLY WHERE HE FLED--BUT IT IS PROBABLE HE RETURNED HERE... TO THE COMPANY'S LIVING AREA--

YES--, THERE'S A LIGHT IN HIS TRAILER--

AS I HOPED.. HE'S STOPPED TO COLLECT HIS BLOOD MONEY..

THE BATMAN?

FINISH COUNTING... I'M CURIOUS TO LEARN EXACTLY HOW MUCH THE RIVAL MOVIE OUTFIT PAID YOU TO SABOTAGE "THE HAMMER OF HELL"..

GAVIN-- THE CAMERAMAN!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND... HOW COULD YOU HAVE KNOWN...?

YOU MADE ONE HOWLING MISTAKE...IN FRONT OF WITNESSES! AT THE SITE OF THE PLANE CRASH...YOU MENTIONED THE PILOT WAS STRANGLED --BEFORE YOU WERE CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE BODY TO SEE!

YOU WERE BUSY TAKING PICTURES...SO YOU MUST HAVE ALREADY KNOWN HOW HE DIED!

BUT... I WASN'T ANYWHERE NEAR THAT PLANE...

NO... BUT ONE OF THOSE SPANISH GOONS YOU HIRED COULD'VE HIDDEN IN THE COCKPIT OF THE NIEUPORT IT PUT A GUN ON THE PILOT, FORCED HIM TO TAKE OFF-- THEN STRANGLED HIM IN THE AIR AND BAILED OUT BEHIND THE MOUNTAIN! YOU ALSO HAD A THUG SABOTAGE THE PLANE AS INSURANCE! I NOTICED THAT ONE OF THE NIEUPORT'S FLAPS WAS STUCK IN THE HALF-DOWN POSITION...

8

THAT'S WHY THE CRAFT *ROLLED* JUST BEFORE THE CRASH...

I DIDN'T DO *ANYTHING* TO THE PLANE... I HAVE NO REASON TO LIE--*NOW!*

SHOTS--!

BLAM BLAM

:UH: HURT... BAD... NOT GONNA MAKE IT...

ANSON... HE'S BEEN HIT IN THE CHEST--!

EASY, FELLA... CAN YOU *SPEAK?* TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED?

G-GHOST OF *VON HAMMER...* BLASTED ME... WENT AWAY... TOWARD AIRFIELD-- ...AAH!

DEAD... CUT DOWN BY SOME-BODY WITH A BIG CALIBER PISTOL! YET... IT *COULDN'T* HAVE BEEN GAVIN! HE WAS WITH *ME!*

THERE'S ONLY ONE POSSIBLE ANSWER...TWO MEN SABOTAGING THE FILM--!

TOUGH ON MY DIRECTOR BUDDY... BUT A LUCKY BREAK FOR *ME!* I CAN MAKE MY GETAWAY WHILE *THE BATMAN'S* TENDING TO ANSON!

AND THE *SECOND* HAS TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF *VINTAGE AIRCRAFT--*

UNLESS I BUY THE *GHOST* THEORY-- WHICH I *DON'T!*

POW

GAVIN'S EVEN WORSE AT THE 100-YARD DASH THAN HIS *EMPLOYEE...*

HE'LL STAY PUT UNTIL I GET AROUND TO COLLECTING HIM--

9

SOMEBODY'S STARTING AN ENGINE... SOUNDS LIKE THE OLD FOKKER TRIPLANE--

ANSON SAID HIS KILLER WENT TOWARD THE STRIP... GOT TO RUN LIKE I'VE NEVER RUN BEFORE!

THE FOKKER'S READY TO GO! BUT I DON'T SEE A PILOT--!

PLEASE, TURN AROUND SLOWLY SO I MAY LOOK AT YOU!

YOU ARE THE AMERICAN LAWMAN-- THE BATMAN!

YES... I DON'T BELIEVE WE'VE MET!

YOU MAY CALL ME THE GHOST OF HANS VON HAMMER--!

I'D RATHER NOT--! I'D RATHER CALL YOU BY YOUR NAME!

HEINRICH FRANZ AT YOUR SERVICE!

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S BEEN SABOTAGING THE MOVIE!

GUILTY AS CHARGED! THIS... FILTHY AMERICAN FILM IS AN INSULT TO THE MEMORY OF GERMANY'S FINEST HERO--

--VON HAMMER WAS AS A GOD! THE AMERICANS SHOW HIM AS A SOFT, SNIVELING WEAKLING...

...PUTTING INTO HIS MOUTH WORDS OF COMPASSION ...OF MERCY... OF RESPECT FOR THE ENEMY!

BAH! HE WAS RUTHLESS, WAS MY ANCESTOR-- MAGNIFICENTLY RUTHLESS!

NOT THE WAY I READ HIS STORY! I SEE THE BARON AS A MAN CAUGHT BETWEEN HIS FEELING OF DUTY AND HIS OWN BEST INSTINCTS... A TRAGIC, TORMENTED AND SOMEWHAT PITIFUL SOLDIER--

10

AS YOU WILL! I AM NOT GOING TO ARGUE HISTORY! RATHER, I AM GOING TO *KILL!*

SHOOT AN *UNARMED* ENEMY? IS THAT HOW *VON HAMMER* WOULD'VE ACTED? OR WOULD HE HAVE WELCOMED A FAIR FIGHT?

YES, YES... YOU ARE *RIGHT!* A CONTEST OF *SKILL--THAT* IS THE WAY OF *VON HAMMER!*

THE *NIEUPORT* IS FUELED AND READY--

I SHALL MEET YOU-- IN THE *KILLER SKY!*

ONCE, A LONG TIME AGO, AN OLD STUNT-PILOT SHOWED ME HOW TO FLY THESE CRATES...

I HOPE I REMEMBER ALL HE SAID! BECAUSE IF I DON'T--

THAT MANIAC WILL GO FREE... AND I'LL BE DEAD!

AS THE FIRST LIGHT OF THE DAY BREAKS OVER THE CLOUDS EAST OF THE FIELD, TWO FRAIL THINGS-- BARELY MORE THAN STICKS COVERED WITH CANVAS-- CLIMB SLOWLY AWAY FROM THE EARTH...

...THEY TURN IN SCREAMING ARCS AND BEGIN A DEATH-DUEL--!

HE'S TRYING FOR ME WITH THE LUGER... MAYBE HE'S FORGOTTEN I'M NOT ARMED--

KPOW POW

--OR MAYBE HE'S NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN A FAIR FIGHT!

IN EITHER CASE, I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF RANGE--!

I'M DOING SOME FANCY FLYING... AND I DON'T UNDER-STAND HOW! WITH THE SMALL AMOUNT OF INSTRUCTION I'VE HAD--

--I COULDN'T BE PUSHING THIS KITE THROUGH AEROBATICS!

IT'S ALMOST AS THOUGH I'M GETTING HELP!

12

HE'S DIVING... STRAIGHT AT ME--! DOES HE PLAN TO CRASH--?

NO...HE'S USING HIS PROP TO CAUSE TURBULENCE... HOPING THAT I'LL BE BOUNCED AROUND UNTIL I MAKE A MISTAKE...

--A FATAL MISTAKE!

IF THE PLANE CAN TAKE IT--SO CAN I! FIRST JOB IS TO GET OUT OF HIS BACK-WASH...BY GOING UPSTAIRS--

...AND THEN I'LL TRY A STUNT OF MY OWN--HUH? THE ENGINE'S QUITTING...

ONE OF THE SLUGS MUST HAVE CUT THE FUEL LINE...

I'M A SITTING DUCK...BUT HE CAN'T HAVE MORE THAN ONE BULLET LEFT--

GOT TO MAKE HIM WASTE IT...

--BY DOING THE TOTALLY... UNEXPECTED!

YOU ARE A *COURAGEOUS* FOE! IT IS ALMOST WITH *RESPECT* THAT I DESTROY YOU!

I SHALL *SALUTE* YOU AS YOU FALL-- AS THE GREAT *BARON* SALUTED VALIENT ENEMIES!

THUNK!

FRANZ... *BEHIND* YOU!

SURELY THIS IS NOT *WORTHY* OF *THE BATMAN*...EXPECTING ME TO BELIEVE I AM ATTACKED FROM BEHIND--

--WHILE WE RIDE THE *WINDS* HIGH ABOVE THE GROUND--!

NO... YOUR *SCARF--!*

G-EHHH!!

14

IT CAUGHT IN THE PROP.. YANKED HIM OUT OF THE COCKPIT--

YAAAARRRRGGGHHHEEEE

I WONDER IF FRANZ WAS REALLY VON HAMMER'S DESCENDANT-- OR JUST ANOTHER VICTIM OF THE MOST TERRIBLE OF LOVES--

--THE LOVE OF WAR!

I GUESS I'LL NEVER KNOW...

End

15

A TRIBUTE TO THE GREAT
Joe Kubert & Robert Kanigher

FROM

DENNY O'NEIL (SCRIPTER) NEAL ADAMS DICK GIORDANO (ART) JULIUS SCHWARTZ (EDITOR)

DC DETECTIVE COMICS

Detective Comics presents BATMAN AND BATGIRL

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

JAN. NO. 407

The BRIDE of MAN-BAT!

RARELY HAS THE **BATMAN** BEEN STYMIED BY AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY... BUT **THIS** ONE HAD HIM HUNG UP, UNTIL...

...NG NEWS

BAT EXHIBIT OPENS AT MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY TODAY!

SO THAT'S WHERE HE'S BEEN--

"TONIGHT'S GALA OPENING WILL BE PRESIDED OVER BY ITS CREATOR... PROF. KIRK LANGSTROM..."

THE NEXT PARAGRAPH BURNS DEEP IN HIS MIND AS HE RACES THE CLOCK THROUGH THE NIGHT STREETS OF **GOTHAM**...

"... FOLLOWED AT MIDNIGHT BY HIS **MARRIAGE**...

...TO HIS CHILDHOOD SWEETHEART, MISS **FRANCINE** LEE, AT THE CATHEDRAL OF..."

LANGSTROM-- THE DELUDED GENIUS WHO SECRETLY TURNED HIMSELF INTO A **MAN-BAT!**

AND **FRANCIE**-- THAT SWEET, DEVOTED GIRL-- MARRYING **HIM**...? IT...?

IT **CAN'T** HAPPEN! I **MUSTN'T** LET IT...

...AND IF ANYONE SEES FIT WHY THIS MARRIAGE SHOULD **NOT** BE CONSUM-MATED...

I KNOW WHY IT MUST NOT BE...
THIS--IS WHY!
G-GASP...!
A SHOCKING REVELATION TO THE INNOCENTS GATHERED IN THAT HALLOWED SETTING! BUT WILL IT STOP THE...
MARRIAGE: IMPOSSIBLE
STORY BY: FRANK ROBBINS - ART BY: NEAL ADAMS & DICK GIORDANO - EDITED BY: JULIE SCHWARTZ
2

SKREEEK! THE BATMAN-- AGAIN?

PANDEMONILIM SHATTERS THE SERENITY OF THE VAST CATHEDRAL, AS...

SKREEK! ALWAYS-- THE BATMAN ENVIES ME! TRYS TO DESTROY ME!

HOLD IT, FRANCIE! EVEN IF YOU COULD FOLLOW HIM-- THINK! THINK WHAT YOU'RE DOING!

I :SOB: HAVE THOUGHT-- VERY DEEPLY, BATMAN!

AND NEITHER YOU--NOR ANYONE IN HEAVEN OR HELL--CAN PREVENT MY MARRYING HIM!

NOTHING YOU SAY CAN CONVINCE ME THAT THIS-- "WEDDING"--IS ANYTHING BUT INSANE!

THE DEFIANT BRIDE'S WORDS KICK OFF AN INSTANT RECALL IN THE GREAT DETECTIVE'S MEMORY-FILE! TO THAT BEWILDERING NIGHT WHEN...

NOTHING...? YOU REALLY BELIEVE IT ALL ENDED BETWEEN KIRK AND ME THAT NIGHT, NOT SO LONG AGO...?

I DIDN'T INTEND FOR HIM TO SMASH HEADLONG INTO THAT DESCENDING DOOR!

ONLY WANTED TO PREVENT HIS ESCAPE--TILL I COULD GIVE HIM THE ONLY ANTIDOTE THAT MAY REVERSE HIS "BESTIALITY"!

BUT NOW--WILL HE DIE OF BRAIN DAMAGE NO MATTER WHAT I DO?

NO--I MUST RISK IT! AT LEAST LET HIM DIE AS A-- MAN!

PULSE STILL STRONG--BUT WHAT GOES ON IN THAT SAD, NUMBED BRAIN, LANGSTROM?

HAS THAT DELICATE HUMAN TISSUE BEEN BATTERED BEYOND REPAIR?

NO MATTER! YOU SHALL NOT REMAIN A-- CREATURE!

3

CREATURE-- AM I? SKREEEK!

I'M... SKREEK... MORE MAN THAN YOU, BATMAN...

...AND... SKREEK... MORE BAT!

AND MAKE ME A FRAUD LIKE YOU?

NEVER! NOW MAN-BAT IS MORE THAN YOUR EQUAL, BAT-MAN!

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO STEAL MY BAT-POWERS FROM ME!

STEAL? I WAS TRYING TO RESTORE TO YOU--WHAT YOU STOLE FROM YOURSELF--YOUR HUMAN FORM!

BEFORE--HE WAS FIGHTING DESPERATELY TO FIND THE ANTIDOTE! NOW--HE WANTS TO LIVE HALF-MAN-- HALF-BAT!

4

WITHOUT THE DESIRE TO RETURN TO NORMAL-- WHAT A FEARSOME MENACE HE COULD BECOME!

THE WRONG WORD-- THE WRONG GESTURE-- COULD TRIGGER HIS TWISTED ANIMAL-MIND TO VIOLENCE! OR EVEN-- WORSE!

I WOULDN'T REACH FIRST-BASE TRYING TO COAX HIM DOWN! HE'S A SCARED, SUSPICIOUS NIGHT-CREATURE NOW-- TRYING TO HIDE IN THE DARKNESS!

BUT THERE IS SOMEONE HE'D TRUST-- SOMEONE WHO COULD CONVINCE HIM TO TAKE THAT ANTIDOTE!

"THEN, AS MY BACK-UP LIGHTS ACTIVATED THE OVERHEAD DOOR MECHANISM...!"

MUSTN'T GIVE HIM TIME TO REACT--OR ACT!

"THE AUTOMATIC CLOSING ACCOMPLISHED MY PURPOSE--TRAPPING THE MAN-CREATURE INSIDE MY BATCAVE!"

THOOMP

"SPEEDING BACK, I FOUND HIS FIANCÉE WHERE I'D LEFT HER... OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY..."

OH-H, BATMAN-- DID YOU FIND KIRK...?

MORE THAN THAT, FRANCIE-- I'VE GOT HIM! BUT HE'S IN WORSE DANGER THAN BEFORE!

"AS WE DROVE, I IMPRESSED THE NEED FOR SECRECY ABOUT THE BATCAVE...SHE UNDERSTOOD! THEN AS I FILLED HER IN..."

HE'LL LISTEN TO YOU-- THIS MAY BE HIS LAST CHANCE TO SAVE HIMSELF!

HE-HE'S GOT TO! OH, BATMAN-- I LOVE HIM SO!

"EVEN THOUGH THE BATCAVE WAS STILL SEALED WHEN WE RETURNED, I SENSED SOMETHING WAS NOT AS I'D LEFT IT..."

THERE'S A STRANGE STILLNESS NOW--AN EMPTY STILLNESS!

CALL OUT TO HIM, FRANCIE!

5

KIRK! KIRK-- DARLING... IT'S FRANCIE! YOUR FRANCIE-- ANSWER ME!

"IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR US BOTH TO REALIZE..."

GONE-- VANISHED! OH-H, WHY COULDN'T HE WAIT?

BUT HOW DID HE ESCAPE? THE BATCAVE ELEVATOR-ENTRANCE IS CONCEALED...

WHAT A FOOL I WAS! HE GOT OUT THE SAME WAY--HE GOT IN! SOME UN-SEEN CREVICE IN THE CAVE- ROOF!

"DAWN WAS STREAKING THE NIGHT-SKY WHEN I DROVE HER HOME! WHAT ELSE COULD I DO? THERE WERE NO CLUES TO WHERE HE MIGHT HEAD..."

WHERE WILL HE GO NOW, BATMAN-- WHAT WILL HE DO?

ONE THING HE WON'T DO--IS TO HARM YOU, FRANCIE!

BUT IF HE COMES OUT OF HIDING AT ALL-- IT WILL BE TO CONTACT YOU!

PHONE ME RIGHT AWAY--WE MUST HELP HIM! YOU CAN REACH ME AT THIS NUMBER...

YOU THINK IT WAS ENDED--FINISHED-- BETWEEN KIRK AND ME WHEN YOU DROVE AWAY? NO, BATMAN-- THAT'S WHEN IT STARTED!

"NO SOONER HAD I ENTERED MY ROOM...WHEN I HEARD IT! SCRAPING SOUNDS... LIKE A CHILD'S NAILS ACROSS A BLACKBOARD!"

TH-THE-- WINDOW!

"THAT'S WHERE I LEFT IT... UNTIL I COULD DREAM UP ANOTHER WAY TO TRACK HIM DOWN! WHAT HAD HAPPENED AFTER I LEFT...?"

6

"IT WAS... KIRK!' OR WHAT HAD BEEN KIRK... WORDLESSLY BEGGING ME TO LET HIM IN..."

"DID HE DOUBT FOR A MINUTE I WOULD? AND YET ONCE INSIDE... FACING EACH OTHER LIKE STRANGERS..."

AM I TOO REPULSIVE TO LOOK AT, FRANCIE? EVEN FOR YOU...?

"AND THEN... THE TENSION SNAPPED! I KNEW WHERE I BELONGED..."

OH-H, KIRK--KIRK! YOU KNOW BETTER THAN THAT!

...I'LL ALWAYS BE YOURS! YOU'LL ALWAYS BE-- MINE!

NO MATTER-- WHAT? NO MATTER HOW I LOOK...?

IT--IT'LL TAKE TIME, DARLING, BUT I KNOW SO WELL THE REAL MAN INSIDE...

AGH-H! THEN THE OUT-SIDE DOES DISGUST YOU...!

B-BUT THAT CAN BE CHANGED! CHANGED BACK TO WHAT YOU WERE-- IF YOU'LL ONLY LET ME CONTACT THE BATMAN!

HE HAS AN-- ANTIDOTE!

7

I--I HAVE HIS NUMBER RIGHT HERE!

"CHANGE BACK"-- INTO THE "MAN" YOU ONCE KNEW?

NEVER! SKREEEK!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING...?

SKREEEEK! I WANT NEITHER THE BATMAN'S BLASTED ANTIDOTE-- NOR HIS MEDDLING HELP! AND NOW--YOU HAVE NO WAY TO CONTACT HIM!

B-BUT, KIRK--WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?

ANYTHING... ANYTHING, DEAREST!

SKREEK! I'LL TELL YOU WHAT WE CAN DO!

IT WILL BE--THE SUPREME TEST OF YOUR LOVE FOR ME!

"WHEN I LEFT FOR THE MUSEUM, I COULD FEEL HIS PIERCING EYES BORING INTO ME! DOUBTING I COULD GO THROUGH WITH IT!"

"LATER, AS I HANDED KIRK'S NOTE TO THE CURATOR..."

I'M SORRY HE'S NOT WELL, MISS LEE! BUT CERTAINLY--YOU MAY TAKE WHATEVER HE NEEDS FROM HIS LAB!

THANK YOU, MR. WILKINS... IT WON'T TAKE LONG!

"HE WAS WAITING WHEN I RETURNED...LIKE A GREEDY BOY AT CHRISTMAS..."

YOU'VE *GOT* IT?

EVERYTHING, KIRK DARLING! BUT...

...MUST YOU *MASQUERADE* AS A *MAN*, WHEN YOU COULD...?

...WHEN I COULD *BECOME* ONE? OH NO, MY SWEET-- THIS MUST BE DONE *MY* WAY...

...OR I'LL *KNOW* YOUR LOVE IS JUST A *PRETENSE!*

"AND... AS HE TOLD ME LATER... THE NEXT DAY ALL WENT WELL!"

PROF. LANGSTROM? I THOUGHT YOU WERE ILL...

MY RECUPERATIVE POWERS ARE STRONGER THAN I IMAGINED, WILKINS! ESPECIALLY WHEN THERE'S THE INCENTIVE...

...OF *COMPLETING* MY NOCTURNAL-MAMMAL EXHIBIT IN TIME FOR THE OPENING! YOU WANT THAT, OF COURSE...?

Y-YES, OF COURSE...

THEN I MUST HAVE-- *COMPLETE PRIVACY!* TO PREPARE--*TWO* MASTERPIECES!

TWO...?

WRAP

9

"THEN, ALONE BEHIND BOLTED DOORS..."

A FESTIVE OCCASION FOR *ALL* NOCTURNAL CREATURES TO CELEBRATE, EH, MY FURRY *BROTHERS*?

NOW THAT I AM ONE OF YOU, I HAVE A DEEPER INSIGHT INTO YOUR NATURES! YOUR HUNGERS--YOUR THIRSTS--YOUR NEED FOR A *MATE!*

SO I PREPARE FOR *MY* FUTURE-- AS WELL AS YOURS!

THERE'S ONLY *ONE* WAY TO *INSURE* THAT FRANCIE WILL REMAIN *FAITHFUL* TO ME!

AND I *DID* REMAIN FAITHFUL, *BATMAN!* NOW-- NOTHING IN HEAVEN OR HELL CAN PREVENT MY *MARRYING* HIM!

I'M GOING TO BRING HIM BACK TO THE ALTAR...

DON'T BE A *FOOL*, FRANCIE! EVEN *YOUR* LOVE COULDN'T SURVIVE--

...SURVIVE A *MOCKERY* OF MARRIAGE LIKE THIS ONE!

10

A--A MOCKERY-- IS IT? NOT-- SURVIVE... SKREEEK?!

G-GOOD GOD! N-NO...?

OUR LOVE IS EVERLASTING! BECAUSE NOW...

...WE'RE TWO OF A KIND! SKREEK!

MAN-BAT, DEAREST-- WHERE ARE YOU HIDING? SKREEK... SKREEK...

SHE--SHE REALLY LOVES THAT TWISTED THING! ENOUGH TO SACRIFICE HER HUMAN BEAUTY TO BECOME HIS ANIMAL MATE!

HE MUST'VE PERSUADED HER TO TAKE THE SAME BAT-GLAND-EXTRACT THAT MADE HIM WHAT HE IS!

AS THE SKREEKS OF THE FRANTIC BAT-BRIDE ECHO THROUGH THE DARK VASTNESSES OF THE GREAT CATHEDRAL CEILING -- SEARCHING FOR HER BAT-MATE...

SKREEK... SKREEK... SKREEK... IT IS I, DEAREST! NOTHING CAN PART US NOW...

YES, MY LOVE-- NOTHING...

ONLY DISLODGED SPECKS OF DUST FLOATING DOWN ALERT THE STUNNED CRUSADER...

KARAAASH

THEN THE BLENDING OF SEARCHING SHRIEKS REVEALS THE UNITING OF THE FRUSTRATED LOVERS...

THEY'RE HUNTING FOR A WAY OUT! AND IF THEY FIND IT-- I MAY NEVER HELP THEM!

ONLY ONE PLACE WHERE THERE'S OPEN WINDOWS! THE-- BELL-TOWER!

MUST HEAD THEM OFF...

12

REACHING HIS GOAL IN TIME, THE BATMAN WAITS SILENTLY-- CHECKING HIS ONLY "WEAPON"!

I'VE CARRIED THIS ANTIDOTE WITH ME EVER SINCE MAN-BAT VANISHED!

AN EXTRA LARGE DOSE-- WITH LUCK, ENOUGH TO SAVE BOTH OF THEM!

SUDDENLY...

KLONGGG

AS THE BAT-HUNTER IS SHAKEN AND DIS-TRACTED BY THE ECHOING REVERBER-ATION...

KLONG:G KLONG:G

I OVER-LOOKED AN ATTACK FROM-- BELOW!

SKREEK-- GO GET HIM, LOVER!

SKREEEK! YOUR MEDDLING IN OUR LIVES ENDS NOW, BATMAN!

AND THEN AS A FIERCE BRIDE FLIES UP TO REJOIN HER BRIDE-GROOM!...

CAN'T EVEN COUNT ON FRANCIE'S HELP NOW-- THEY ARE TWO OF A KIND!

13

IF THEY KILL ME...THEY KILL THEIR ONLY CHANCE FOR HUMAN SURVIVAL!

BUFFETED AND BATTERED BY HIS FURIOUS OPPONENTS, THE BATMAN DESPERATELY LOOKS FOR ANY MEANS OF DEFENSE...

THE--ANTIDOTE! IF--IF ONLY I CAN REACH IT!

UNH...

UH...UH...

UH...UHN...

ONE FINAL...AGONIZED EFFORT... AND...

GOT IT!

ARGH-H-H!

14

ANOTHER LIGHTNING JAB...AND...

SKREEE-EEK!

DONE...BUT-- WHAT HAVE I ACCOMPLISHED, EXCEPT SAVING MYSELF?

AND THEN... BEFORE HIS AWE-FILLED EYES...

...HARROWING MINUTES LATER... ALONE... A BEWILDERED COUPLE CLING TO EACH OTHER IN A DESPERATE EMBRACE... LIKE LOST CHILDREN!

OH-H, KIRK--*KIRK!* HOW *HORRIBLE* IT ALL WAS!

Y-YES, FRANCIE DARLING! UNBELIEVABLY HORRIBLE...

I WAS-- *INHUMAN!* DOING WHAT I DID TO *YOU*...

15

WE DID IT TO EACH OTHER, KIRK-- OUR LOVE TURNED INTO AN *EVIL* OBSESSION!

AND ONLY *THE BATMAN* UNDER-STOOD...

NOW THEY HAVE A FIGHTING CHANCE TO MAKE IT--AS ALL *TOO HUMAN* LOVERS!

END

DC BATMAN JAN. NO. 93

the BRAVE and the BOLD

DC HOUSE OF MYSTERY

BATMAN

. . . . DO YOU DARE ENTER THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

8819

CLIK

CLIK

LEMME...*LEMME IN* IF YA VALUE YOUR *LIFE!*

TSK, TSK! I HAVEN'T *HAD* ONE TO VALUE FOR *YEARS!* BESIDES, I RUN A *VER-Y EXCLUSIVE* PAD HERE!--YOU'RE A NASTY *CRIMINAL TYPE--*

...AND YOU MAY NOT ENTER...

HE COULDN'T STAY... BUT, *YOU*, DEAR READERS, ARE WELCOME! IN FACT, LET'S WATCH THE REST OF THIS DISMAL DRAMA *TOGETHER...*

...NOW *THERE*-- THAT FELLOW OUT-SIDE--*THERE'S* A STERLING STALWART! WITH THOSE *BAT WINGS* AND ALL, HE REMINDS ME OF MY UNCLE FROM TRANSYLVANIA!

B-578

1

END OF THE LINE, BEEFY!

NAW... I AIN'T GOIN' BACK TO STIR, BATMAN! NOT WHILE I GOT A GUN!

YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TIME TO USE IT, TOUGH GUY..

UNN--!

THAT AIN'T THE WAY IT LOOKS TO ME!

AWW.., I KNEW I SHOULD'VE FIXED THAT LOOSE BOARD!

BUT STILL.., I NEVER EXPECTED THE GREAT BATMAN.. TO TRIP! COULD IT BE HE'S GETTING OLD?

HUH? A MISFIRE...

KLIK

YOU ONLY GET ONE CHANCE...

...AND YOU'VE HAD IT!

BATMAN! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I AM, COMMISSIONER... BUT JUST BARELY! IF BEEFY'D HAD A WORKING WEAPON...

...I'D BE COLD MEAT!

I STUMBLED... LIKE SOME RANK AMATEUR!

AND NO WONDER! YOU HAVEN'T HAD ANY REST FOR A WEEK! FIRST THERE WAS THAT COUNTERFEITING RING... THEN THE PRISON BREAK...

EVEN A MAN WITH YOUR PHYSIQUE CAN'T TAKE THAT MUCH DANGER IN SO SHORT A TIME!

FRANKLY, BATMAN, I THINK YOUR NERVES ARE SHOT! YOU NEED A VACATION...BADLY!

I HAVE A STEAMSHIP TICKET TO IRELAND! THE LINER LEAVES AT NOON TOMORROW... WITH YOU ABOARD!

I CAN'T..., THERE'S STILL SO MUCH TO DO!

IT'LL KEEP! GET ON THAT SHIP...AND DON'T SHOW YOUR COWL IN GOTHAM FOR AT LEAST A MONTH!

DON'T ARGUE! YOU'RE NO GOOD TO ME DEAD!

OKAY, OKAY... I KNOW WHEN I'M BEATEN! SEE YOU IN A FEW WEEKS!

SO HE'S TAKING A TRIP... WHAT SAY WE TAG ALONG, FELLOW FEN FIENDS... TO A PLACE THAT'S CHEERY AS A COFFIN AND COLD AS A WITCH'S KISS... AND TO A MARROW-CHILLING TALE OF TREACHERY...

RED WATER CRIMSON DEATH

WRITER DENNY O'NEIL

ARTIST NEAL ADAMS

EDITOR MURRAY BOLTINOFF

3

AND HERE WE *ARE*...ALREADY ALMOST ACROSS THE ATLANTIC...

THOUGH YOU MAY NOT *RECOGNIZE* HIM, THAT HUMAN AT THE RAIL IS *BATMAN*... ALIAS *BRUCE WAYNE!*

KEEP YOUR EYE ON THAT *KID*-TYPE HUMAN, TOO! SOMETHING TELLS ME HE'LL BE *IMPORTANT* TO OUR TALE...

WE'RE NEARING THE ARIN ISLES, OFF THE NORTH COAST OF IRELAND...

...NO RADIO STATIONS, FEW TELEPHONES, AND VIRTUALLY NO CRIME!

A SETTING LIKE THAT MIGHT BE JUST WHAT I NEED TO GET MY HEAD TOGETHER!

MISTER... MY BALL!

HERE YOU ARE, SON!

MY NAME'S NOT *SON*... IT'S *SEAN!*

ATTENTION!

WE'RE ENTERING A STORM AREA... ALL PASSENGERS ARE REQUESTED TO GO TO THEIR CABINS AND STAY OFF THE DECKS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!

BETTER DO WHAT THE MAN SAYS, SEAN! I'LL SEE YOU LATER!

4

WE'RE IN... UGH... BRUCE'S CABIN...

A REAL BRUTE OF A BLOW OUT THERE--! SHIP'S TOSSING LIKE A SOAP BUBBLE...

GOOD LORD! THAT YOUNGSTER... ALONE, ON DECK! IF ONE OF THOSE BIG WAVES HITS...

...HE'S CERTAIN TO BE SWEPT OVER!

UNCLE... UNCLE!

YEP, JUST LIKE BRUCIE FIGURED... INTO THE DRINK!

MAN... ER... MEN OVERBOARD!

WAVES MUST BE THIRTY FEET HIGH... THE KID MAY ALREADY BE DROWNED...

NO... HE'S ALIVE... GOT TO... REACH... HIM...

SWIMMING IN THIS IS NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE... WATER HITS LIKE A HEAVYWEIGHT!

5

MADE IT...! BUT HOW LONG CAN I SUPPORT HIS WEIGHT... AND MINE?

TURN ME LOOSE... 'TIS ME GRAND-DA...

HE'S BABBLING... PROBABLY IN SHOCK...

HERE I AM, GRAND-DA...

STEADY, BOY... YOU'RE *IMAGINING* THINGS...

AND SO AM **I!** I COULD **SWEAR** THAT WAVE WAS A... MAN!

HE'S PASSED OUT... SUCCUMBED TO THE COLD... I'M GETTING... DROWSY... TOO...

AHOY! GRAB THE PRESERVER!

IF I WAS WEARY BEFORE... I'M SHOT NOW! THAT LITTLE DIP WAS THE FINISHING TOUCH...

MUSCLES FEEL LIKE SO MUCH SPAGHETTI... AND MY NERVES ARE JANGLING LIKE A FOUR-ALARM FIRE...

GORDON WAS RIGHT! I'VE HAD IT!

ALL I WANT NOW IS A CLEAN PAIR OF PAJAMAS AND ABOUT A WEEK'S SLEEP...

WHAT THE DEVIL...?

I TOLD ALFRED NOT TO PACK THIS! UNTIL I REGAIN MY HEALTH, THE BATMAN IS DEAD!

AND TO MAKE CERTAIN...I'LL GIVE HIM A BURIAL AT SEA!

EIGHT HOURS HAVE PASSED... GEE... I'LL BET YOU DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE! ANYWAY, THIS GLORIFIED BATHTUB HAS STOPPED... AND OUR BRUCIE HAS JUST ASKED THE STEWARD, WHY!

IT'S THE BOY, SIR! HE LIVES ON THAT ISLAND...

...AND WE'VE INSTRUCTIONS TO PUT HIM ASHORE IN THE LAUNCH!

UMMM...ONE OF THE ARIN ISLANDS... QUIET... ISOLATED... IN OTHER WORDS, JUST WHAT I NEED!

HEY... ASK HIM TO WAIT!

7

SO BRUCIE'S FOLLOWING THE KID... AND IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T GUESSED. *WE'RE* FOLLOWING BRUCIE...

QUICK TRIP! AND THAT'S THE DOCK OF *KENNAMORA*... WHICH, IF YOU'RE LIKE ME, YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF BEFORE!

'TIS YOUNG *SEAN*... BACK FROM HIS TRAVELIN'!

AN' HOW WAS *AMERICA*, LAD?

'TWAS NICE! BUT IT'S GLAD I AM TO BE HOME!

WHO'S YOUR *FRIEND*?

MY NAME IS *BRUCE WAYNE!*

BRUCE SAVED MY *LIFE*, UNCLE DERRY!

THEN, THOUGH WE DON'T USUALLY TAKE TO *STRANGERS*, YOU'VE A WARM WELCOME HERE, MR. WAYNE!

YOU'LL BE STAYIN' WITH US AN' I'LL HEAR OF NO OTHER PLAN!

NOW DIG *THIS!* BRUCE WAYNE IS A *RICH GUY*, RIGHT? USED TO EATING PATÉ DE FOIE GRAS AND PHEASANT UNDER GLASS AND LIKE THAT, RIGHT! SO WHY IS HE ENJOYING PLAIN *MULLIGAN STEW*? GO FIGURE IT...

ANYWAY, LET'S SKIP THE NEXT FEW HOURS...

8

...AND CHECK IN AT SEAN'S BEDTIME!

OFF WITH YOU NOW, LAD!

AWWW... WOULDN'T YOU LET ME FINISH ME STORY?

I WOULD *NOT!* TO THE SHEETS, AN' NO COMPLAINTS!

AH, THE POOR TYKE! EVER SINCE HIS PARENTS WERE KILLED, HE'S BEEN BURIED IN THE OLD BOOKS...

FASCINATED, HE IS, BY THE TALES OF *KING HUGH*, WHO ONCE RULED OUR ISLAND!

HOW DID HIS PARENTS DIE?

NONE CAN SAY! ONLY THERE'S MANY *ANOTHER* HAS DIED THE SAME WAY... FROM THE *RED SEA*

RED SEA?

AYE! 'TWAS A YEAR AGO THE WATERS 'ROUND OUR ISLAND BEGAN BEIN' BLOOD COLOR...

...KILLIN' ALIKE THE FISH AN' THE FOLK AS *ATE* THE FISH! 'TIS A *CURSE*, SOME SAY!

I HOPED A VISIT TO RELATIVES IN *YOUR* COUNTRY WOULD BRIGHTEN YOUNG SEAN! BUT IT SEEMS NOT!

I'M VERY SORRY... I'LL BE TURNING IN IF YOU DON'T MIND!

RED WATER... COULD BE CAUSED BY DINOFLAGELLATE POISONING... SINGLE-CELLED ORGANISMS WHICH SOMETIMES CONCENTRATE ENOUGH TO BE DEADLY...

*BUT DERRY IMPLIED THE RED TIDE HAS BEEN AROUND FOR A **YEAR**... AND DINOFLAGELLATES VANISH IN **DAYS**...*

9

NO, BLAST IT! I'M THINKING LIKE BATMAN AGAIN...

I'M BRUCE WAYNE... AND I'M ON VACATION!

ROCK-A-BYE BRUCIE

UHH... WHA...? WHO IS IT? LEMME SLEEP...

HUH... MUST HAVE BEEN DREAMING... THOUGHT I SAW SOME SORT OF... WARRIOR...

GOOD... LORD! MY... COSTUME! BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

ONLY ONE EXPLANATION... I'VE... I'VE GONE AROUND THE BEND!... I'M... MAD!

I'M COMING, KING HUGH...

YOU'LL HELP ME FIND ME MOM AND DAD'S KILLERS, KING...

MAD OR NOT, I CAN'T LET THE KID GO WANDERING AROUND IN HIS SLEEP!

10

SEAN...SEAN! --WAIT!

SAINTS... 'TIS ONE OF 'EM!

'TIS THAT... AN' OUR CHANCE!

COURAGE, LADS! AT 'IM!

HOLD IT! I'M A FRIEND...

SURE... AS THE DIVIL HIMSELF IS A FRIEND!

THE VILLAGERS! MY APPEARANCE MUST HAVE SPOOKED THEM!

'TIS A THING FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE Y'ARE... A BAT MAN!

YOU'RE RIGHT... AND WRONG!

I'M JUST AS HUMAN AS *YOU* ARE... I DRESS AS I DO FOR... *PERSONAL* REASONS!

I'M THINKIN' HE'S SPEAKIN' THE *TRUTH* TO US!

ARE Y' SAYIN' HE'S NOT ONE OF THEM FROM THE *CASTLE*, THEN?

WHAT CASTLE?

UP *THERE*... THE HOUSE OF *KING HUGH*, HIM DEAD THESE THREE CENTURIES, AND HIS QUARTERS EMPTY TILL A *TWELVEMONTH* AGO!

A *JUST RULER* HE WAS... JUST AN' *GOOD!* AN' WHO CAN SAY WHY HE'S RETURNED TO *TORMENT* US?!

TORMENT??

AYE, *THAT!* BRINGIN' GHOSTS AN' BANSHEES AN' SUCH THINGS UPON US!

EVER SINCE THE TIDE TURNED RED, *EVIL* HAS HUNG AROUND KING HUGH'S PALACE, AN' NO DOUBTIN' IT!

12

GHOSTS... BANSHEES! A PACK OF SUPERSTITION--

OWWoooooooooo--

HEAVEN PRESERVE US... THERE 'TIS!

THE BATMAN RAISES HIS EYES TO THE DISTANT RUIN, AND SEES...

SEAN... HE'S HEADING STRAIGHT FOR IT...

WELL... LET HIM! OR LET THE VILLAGERS GO AFTER THE KID...

...I'M SICK... IN NO CONDITION TO... TO...

13

...TO FOOL MYSELF! I'VE GOT TO GO... IT WOULD BE EASIER TO STOP BREATHING THAN TO DELIBERATELY LET THAT BOY GET HURT...

ANOTHER STORM BREAKING... CAN'T EVEN SEE SEAN THROUGH THE RAIN...

...AND HE WON'T BE ABLE TO HEAR ME CALLING EITHER!

THE WRAITH...

DOOM LIVES HERE...GO BACK...

K-RAASH

AS I FIGURED... THERE'S NOTHING SUPERNATURAL ABOUT THE HAPPENINGS HEREABOUTS...

SEAN--! CROSSING THAT BRIDGE...!

...AND THAT SETTLES THAT!

EITHER THAT THING IS REAL...

...OR A THREE-DIMENSIONAL HOLOGRAM PROJECTED ONTO A SCREEN FROM THE CASTLE...

14

GOT TO CATCH HIM... THERE COULD BE A MOB INSIDE...AND I'M NOT UP TO A MAJOR FIGHT!

THE GATE... FALLING! I'VE GOT MAYBE ONE SINGLE SECOND TO DECIDE...

...EITHER STOP AND NOT RISK GETTING SKEWERED ON THE GATE'S SPIKES...

...OR MAKE A DIVE FOR IT!

CHUNGG

SO HE'S INSIDE THE CASTLE... AND A CASTLE IS A *HOUSE*...AND SINCE HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S GETTING *INTO*, IT'S A *MYSTERY*...

SO, IN CASE ANY OF YOU DON'T GET IT... THE *BATMAN* IS IN THE *HOUSE OF MYSTERY!*

NOW, BACK TO OUR STORY...

AN OPEN SPACE OF 50 YARDS BETWEEN ME AND THE MAIN STRUCTURE...

IF ANYONE'S WATCHING, HE'S SURE TO SPOT ME IN THE FLASH OF LIGHTNING!

NO WAY TO CROSS UNDETECTED..!

EH...?

I DISTINCTLY FELT A TAP ON MY SHOULDER... YET THERE'S *NO ONE* HERE!

BUT THERE'S AN ENTRANCE WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO A SECRET PASSAGE...

ODD... I DIDN'T NOTICE IT BEFORE!

15

WHILE YOU WERE TURNING THE PAGES, *BATMAN* AND I WALKED ABOUT 120 FEET UNDERGROUND...

THIS PASSAGE MUST HAVE BEEN BUILT ORIGINALLY AS AN EMERGENCY EXIT...

VOICES... JUST ABOVE ME!

IMAGINE... THEM YOKELS BELIEVE THIS JOINT IS HAUNTED!

MAYBE THEY'RE *RIGHT!* I MEAN *SOMETHIN'* MESSED OUR HOLOGRAM EQUIPMENT...

SURE... THE WIND KNOCKED DOWN THE SCREEN, IS ALL!

WONDER HOW MUCH LONGER WE'LL HAFTA STAY IN THIS HOLE?

NOT MUCH! THE YOKELS *GOTTA* GIVE IN SOON AN' MOVE TO THE MAINLAND!

...THEN, THE BOSS GETS WHAT HE WANTS... A CORNER ON THE FISHIN' RIGHTS IN THESE PARTS!

YEAH... HE SAYS WITH THE ISLANDERS OUTTA THE WAY, HE STANDS TO MAKE A *FORTUNE!*

SOON'S THEY FIND THAT KID'S *BODY* IN THE MORNIN'... I'M BETTIN' THEY MOVE OUT!

I DON'T LIKE FEEDIN' POISON TO A KID... BUT A JOB'S A JOB!

YOU ROTTEN, DIRTY...!

TH... THE *BATMAN!*

16

UNNGH!

WH-IIISSSHHH

THWACK

WHERE'S THE YOUNGSTER...? *ANSWER...* OR YOU'LL REGRET THE DAY YOU WERE BORN!

H...HE'S DOWN THAT CORRIDOR... WITH THE BOSS!

17

PUNT

HE NAILED ME WITH THAT BLADE... GASHED ME PRETTY DEEP!

HAVEN'T TIME TO TEND THE WOUND... THAT THUG SAID THEY WERE GOING TO POISON SEAN!

STYMIED! WHICH WAY DO I GO?

SOMETHING IS TUGGING AT ME... PULLING TO THE RIGHT...!

IT MAKES LESS AND LESS SENSE... WAKING UP IN MY COSTUME... FINDING THE SECRET PASSAGE...

MAYBE THIS IS ALL A DREAM... OR A NIGHT-MARE!

NO MATTER... I'VE GOT TO SEE IT THROUGH!

FUNNY... I SHOULD BE EXHAUSTED... YET ALL MY FATIGUE IS GONE!

THERE'S THE END... AND JUDGING FROM THE SOUNDS, I MADE THE CORRECT CHOICE!

HOLD 'IM... HOLD 'IM STILL!

18

STRUGGLING WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD, BOY! JUST SWALLOW... AND ALL YOUR TROUBLES WILL BE OVER-- *PERMANENTLY!*

NO! DON'T DO IT, SEAN!

WHOMPP

ANYONE WHO WOULD VICTIMIZE A KID... IS *WORSE* THAN CONTEMPTIBLE!

I WISH I DIDN'T HAVE TO PUT YOU AWAY WITH ONE BLOW!

AND *YOU* ARE THE *BOSS--?*

INDEED! ALOYSIUS CABOT, AT YOUR SERVICE! I OWN A FISHERY.

SO I HEARD! I KNOW *EXACTLY* WHO YOU ARE... WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING...

...FAKING GHOSTS SO YOU COULD MANUFACTURE YOUR VILE CHEMICALS WITHOUT BEING DISTURBED... DUMPING THEM INTO THE OCEAN... *MURDERING...*

19

...MURDERING AND DE... DESTROYING FOR PROFIT...

...WELL, YOU'RE FIN... FINISHED...

...I--I CAN'T KEEP MY HEAD STRAIGHT ...FEEL SICK... DIZZY...

OF *COURSE!* I NOTICED A *CUT* ON YOUR ARM! I FURTHER NOTICED THAT SOME OF THE *POISON* SPLASHED INTO IT!

I BELIEVE YOU'RE THE NOTORIOUS *BATMAN*...FROM AMERICA...

...WHERE YOU'LL *NEVER* RETURN... BECAUSE IN LESS THAN A MINUTE, YOU SHALL *DIE!*

HOWEVER, I SHALL MAKE YOU A SPORTING PROPOSITION! ONE OF THESE BEAKERS CONTAINS SIMPLE *WATER*...

...AND THE OTHER AN *ANTIDOTE* TO THE LIQUID WHICH IS KILLING YOU!

YOU HAVE TIME TO CHOOSE *ONE*... ONE *ONLY!*

CAN'T SEE THE BEAKERS HE'S TALKING ABOUT... JUST THAT PORTRAIT ...MUST BE A PAINTING OF KING HUGH...

20

...AND IT'S POINTING TO THAT TEST TUBE AT THE BACK OF THE TABLE...

MADE YOUR CHOICE YET, BATMAN... YOUR FINAL CHOICE?

IMPOSSIBLE! HOW COULD YOU HAVE KNOWN THAT BOTH BEAKERS CONTAINED DEADLY TOXINS... THAT THE REAL ANTIDOTE IS IN THAT TUBE?

SOMEHOW, YOU MADE A LIFE-SAVING GUESS! NO MATTER THOUGH...

...YOU WON'T FULLY RECOVER FOR ANOTHER MINUTE! PLENTY OF TIME FOR ME TO PUT A BULLET THROUGH YOUR BRAIN...

NOTHING CAN SAVE YOU... NOTHING! GOODBYE--

21

AGGH!

HE'S GONE... THE HEAVY PICTURE FRAME MUST HAVE CAUSED A MASSIVE CONCUSSION...

A BAD WAY TO GO... EVEN FOR A MURDERER!

SEAN'S FAINTED... POOR LITTLE GUY! IT'S BEEN A ROUGH NIGHT FOR HIM...

AT LEAST, THE DEATH OF HIS PARENTS HAS BEEN AVENGED!

...AND I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND... SO MANY COINCIDENCES! MY COSTUME... FINDING THE PASSAGE... CHOOSING THE RIGHT CORRIDOR...

22

...THE RIGHT ANTIDOTE--! AND THE BIGGEST COINCIDENCE OF ALL... THAT PORTRAIT FALLING AT PRECISELY THE INSTANT CABOT WAS GOING TO SHOOT!

IN FACT, I CAN'T EVEN EXPLAIN WHY SEAN WANDERED OFF TO THE CASTLE... OR WHY HE WENT ONTO THE DECK OF THE SHIP DURING THE STORM...

UNN... I'VE BEEN SLEEPIN'? WHAT HAPPENED?

SON, I DON'T THINK I'LL *EVER* KNOW!

BATMAN MAY NEVER KNOW... BUT WE DO, EH? KING HUGH IS GONE... BUT NOT FAR...

...AND HE CAN'T *STAND* ANYBODY DISTURBING HIS REST!

23

THE END

DC DETECTIVE COMICS

FEB. NO. 408

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Detective Comics presents BATMAN AND BATGIRL

ROBIN!

WHAT'S

HAPPENING

TO

YOU?!

S649

HERE YOU ARE, BATMAN! IT'S BEEN ALMOST 24 HOURS SINCE ROBIN DISAPPEARED FROM HUDSON UNIVERSITY AND YOU TOOK TO THE TRAIL-- THE TRAIL THAT FINALLY LED YOU HERE... TO THIS DUSTY OLD MANSION ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF GOTHAM CITY... TO THIS ROTTING REMNANT OF BETTER TIMES!

ROBIN...ROBIN...! ROBIN... ROBIN...!

ONLY ONE THING BOTHERS YOU-- THIS HOUSE WASN'T HERE LAST WEEK!

LISTEN BETWEEN THE ECHOES, BATMAN... TO THE PERSISTENT POUNDING OF THE RAMPANT RAIN THAT RATTLES THE BROKEN GLASS... TO THE HOWLING OF THE COLD NIGHT WIND AS IT DIES, SCREAMING IN THE TREES...

WHO...?!

...TO THE CHAOTIC CRACKLE OF THE LIGHTNING THAT REVEALS...

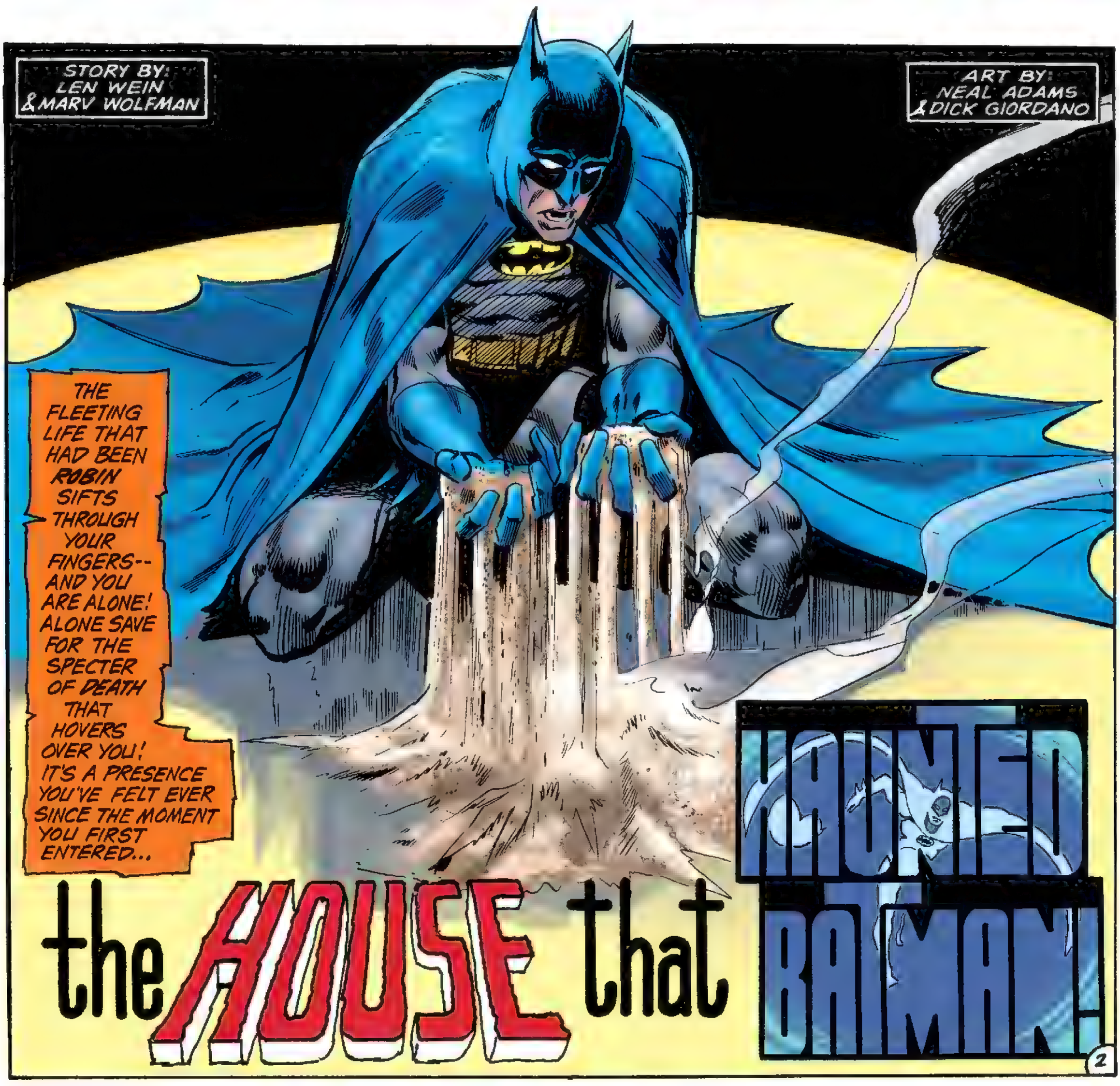
ROBIN!!

BUT SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT, BATMAN! YOU MOVE HESITANTLY TOWARDS THE DRIPPING FIGURE AND...

ROBIN!... WHAT'S WRONG?

OH, MY GOD... NO!

YOU STARE IN HORROR AS...
ROBIN... AGING...
BEFORE MY EYES...
DYING...
TURNING TO... DUST!!


STORY BY: LEN WEIN & MARV WOLFMAN
ART BY: NEAL ADAMS & DICK GIORDANO
THE FLEETING LIFE THAT HAD BEEN ROBIN SIFTS THROUGH YOUR FINGERS-- AND YOU ARE ALONE! ALONE SAVE FOR THE SPECTER OF DEATH THAT HOVERS OVER YOU! IT'S A PRESENCE YOU'VE FELT EVER SINCE THE MOMENT YOU FIRST ENTERED...
the HOUSE that HAUNTED BATMAN!
2

DO YOU HEAR IT... THAT TERRIFIED, PLEADING SCREAM? IT'S COMING FROM SOMEWHERE UPSTAIRS! HURRY, BATMAN, HURRY!

EEEEEE

THAT'S RIGHT--BEHIND THAT DOOR! OPEN IT!

BATS!! THOUSANDS OF... ARRGGHH!

EEEEE

THERE HE IS, BATMAN--THE ONE WHO ALMOST KILLED YOU! DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY! FOLLOW HIM!

FOLLOW HIM... FOLLOW HIM... FOLLO

WATCH OUT! HE'S TRYING TO KILL YOU AGAIN! DON'T GIVE HIM THE CHANCE!

BLAM BLAM

MOVE IT, BATMAN! DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE! HE MUST KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO ROBIN!

HE'S BLOWN IT! IF I'M RIGHT, THIS HALLWAY COMES TO A DEAD-END RIGHT AROUND THIS CORNER!

4

HOLD IT--

YOU DIDN'T REALLY THINK YOU COULD GET...*HUH?*

TURN AROUND, *BATMAN*...AND MEET YOUR *EXECUTIONER!*

YOU?! NO!!

FAREWELL, *BATMAN!* IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS WITH YOU!

HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

ROBIN!

THE NEXT INCREDIBLE MOMENT...

FALLING THROUGH THE WALL...!

VIP

BEEOW

SPANG

SPIRO

WHERE ARE YOU NOW, BATMAN? GO AHEAD-- TRY TO PIERCE THE SHROUDING BLACKNESS! YOU CAN'T SEE? WHY NOT TAKE OUT YOUR FLASHLIGHT?

WHAT NOW, BATMAN? NO FLASHLIGHT? INSTEAD YOU'VE FOUND...

MATCHES?! BUT I WAS SURE I HAD...NO MATTER! THESE WILL HAVE TO DO!

WHY THE GASP, BATMAN? ARE YOU SO SURPRISED TO SEE--

SUPERMAN! ROBIN! FLASH! THE JUSTICE LEAGUE! EVEN COMMISSIONER GORDON! MAN, AM I EVER GLAD TO SEE YOU! I WAS GOING OUT OF MY M...

HEY, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU? DON'T YOU HEAR ME? DON'T YOU SEE ME?

HE WAS A GOOD MAN...A BRAVE MAN! ALL THE WORLD SHALL MOURN BATMAN'S PASSING...

M-MY PASSING? BUT I'M ALIVE-- ALIVE! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

6

I WORKED WITH HIM...I LEARNED FROM HIM...I CALLED HIM MY FRIEND--BUT...

BUT IT *WASN'T* TRUE! HE WAS A *FRAUD*-- A *HYPOCRITE*--A *DISGRACE* TO THE LAW HE VOWED TO UP-HOLD!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? I'VE *ALWAYS* BEEN YOUR *FRIEND!*

YOU'RE *RIGHT!* THE *SUPERMAN-BATMAN* TEAM... HA! WHAT A *JOKE! I* DID ALL THE WORK AND THAT *CAPED CONMAN* TOOK ALL THE CREDIT!

THAT'S A *LIE!* I *NEVER* DID THAT-- *NEVER!*

WAIT A SECOND! OF COURSE! I'M *DREAMING*--THIS IS NOT *REALLY* HAPPENING... IT'S A TERRIBLE *NIGHTMARE!*

HE LOCKED ME AWAY--NEVER LET ME SHARE THE SPOT-LIGHT! THAT'S WHY I LEFT HIM! I--*HATED HIM!*

NO! I WON'T LISTEN! YOU'RE JUST A *DREAM!* ALL I HAVE TO DO IS SHUT MY EYES TO WIPE YOU OUT!

NOW THAT *BATMAN'S* DEAD, *I'M* GOING TO BE THE BOSS--*ME!* AND THE FIRST THING I'M GONNA DO IS *REVEAL* HIS SECRET IDENTITY! IT'S...

NO! YOU CAN'T! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M AS ALIVE AS YOU--

THE MATCH... IT DIED OUT!

7

AND BY THE TIME YOU LIGHT ANOTHER ONE, BATMAN...

GONE--LIKE A LEAF IN THE WIND!

IT WAS ALL AN ILLUSION--BUT WHO'S BEHIND IT? THE JOKER? RIDDLER? CATWOMAN? WHO?

YOU MAY NEVER LIVE TO FIND OUT, BATMAN, BECAUSE...

THE WALLS... THEY'RE CLOSING IN!

THAT'S IT--FIGHT! FIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE!

THIS IS RIDICULOUS! IT'S LIKE AN OLD-TIME MOVIE SERIAL...

NO! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE-- GOT TO!... BUT THERE'S NO WAY!

LET ME OUT...LET ME...

8

...OUT! HUH? WHERE AM I?

YOU FEEL A SUDDEN, TREMBLING PRESSURE SURGE BENEATH YOUR FEET, AND THEN...

WHAAA? WHAT'S HAPPENING?

BWOOOSH

YOU ARC YOUR BODY TO REGAIN YOUR BALANCE AND YOU SUDDENLY SEE...

ROBIN?

ABSOLUTELY CORRECT, *BATMAN!* *ROBIN* IS MY PRISONER... JUST AS *YOU* ARE!

THAT *VOICE*-- I CAN NEVER FORGET IT...

LOOK, *BATMAN*-- GAZE UPON THE FACE OF YOUR MASTER...

*DR. TZIN-TZIN**... THE *MASTER OF ILLUSION!* BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE IN PRISON!

FOOL, DID YOU REALLY BELIEVE ANY OF YOUR ABSURD PRISONS COULD HOLD *ME?*

* *EDITOR'S NOTE- INTRODUCED IN DETECTIVE COMICS # 354, "NO EXIT for BATMAN!"*

WHEN I ESCAPED, I TRIED TO REJOIN THE *TONG*-- BUT THEY *SCORNED* ME... BECAUSE I HAD LOST FACE AT *YOUR* HANDS!

I WANTED REVENGE--BUT THAT LUXURY REQUIRES MONEY AND EQUIPMENT! THE *LEAGUE OF ASSASSINS* PROVIDED *THAT!* TWICE BEFORE THEY HAVE FAILED TO DESTROY YOU...

THIS TIME, THEY HIRED AN *EXPERT* TO DO THE JOB--*ME!!*

DON'T BOTHER SEARCHING THROUGH YOUR *UTILITY BELT, BATMAN!* ITS CONTENTS HAVE BEEN REMOVED--EMPTIED THERE ON THE FLOOR, NEAR THE SWITCH THAT COULD END YOUR ORDEAL!

YOU SHOULD FEEL HONORED, *BATMAN!* I PREPARED THIS HOUSE ESPECIALLY FOR YOU! EVERYTHING IN IT WAS DESIGNED TO WEAKEN YOUR WILL--TO DRIVE YOU TO THE *BREAKING POINT!*

YOU AND *ROBIN* ARE PRISONERS IN MY *HUMAN ACCELERATOR*--WHERE YOU EACH WILL CONTINUE TO BOUNCE UNTIL THE COUNT REACHES *ONE HUNDRED*--WHEREUPON A BOMB PLACED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE TUBE WILL *EXPLODE*, BLASTING YOU BOTH!

BEG, *BATMAN*--*PLEAD* WITH ME AND PERHAPS I WILL *SPARE ROBIN'S* LIFE!

CAN'T GIVE IN... ONLY ONE THING TO DO...

50

17

EVERY TIME I STRIKE THE TOP OF THIS TUBE, THE COUNT INCREASES! BY SPEEDING UP MY MOTION, I CAN OVERTAKE ROBIN'S COUNT!

BATMAN! WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?* DON'T YOU REALIZE YOU ARE HASTENING YOUR OWN *DOOM?*

BEG MY FORGIVENESS... THAT'S *ROBIN'S ONLY* HOPE! BEG, YOU BLASTED FOOL--*BEG!!*

85

87

TOO LATE! YOU'VE...

WHAM

10

THAT *IDIOT*... CHOOSING SUICIDE ... TO SUBMISSION! HIS WORTHLESS ACT OF BRAVADO SHALL COST HIS YOUNG COMPANION'S LIFE!

DON'T BET ANY *YEN* ON THAT, *TZIN-TZIN!*

B-BUT YOU'RE DEAD... *YOU HAVE TO BE!!*

CLUNG

WRONG, *TZIN-TZIN!* I MANAGED TO WEDGE MYSELF AGAINST THE TOP OF THE TUBE AT THE CREST OF MY FINAL BOUNCE--THEN THREW MY *UTILITY BELT* DOWN, SETTING OFF THE EXPLOSION!

AND, HIDDEN BY THE SMOKE, I SOMER-SAULTED DOWN OUT OF HARM'S WAY!

YOU ARE GOING TO WISH YOU *HAD* DIED, *BATMAN*--FOR *NOTHING* ON EARTH CAN STOP...

MY DEADLY DOZEN!!

THE GIANT, *FONG WU*, ALONE CAN CRUSH THE LIFE FROM YOUR BODY... SLOWLY... PAINFULLY...

YOUR MUSCLES TENSE AND THEN...

FWAMMMM

OOOFFF

FWAPP

SOK

KICK

GRNCCHHHHHHJJJ

YOU'RE A BORN LOSER, *TZIN*--AND YOU'LL GO TO YOUR GRAVE THAT WAY! THE ODDS WERE STACKED AGAINST YOU FROM THE START!

12

YOUR EYES BURN WITH A SAVAGERY THEY HAVE NEVER SHOWN BEFORE, AS...

WHEN I'VE FINISHED WITH YOUR GOONS, *TZIN-TZIN*, I'M COMING AFTER YOU--

--NO MATTER WHERE YOU TRY TO HIDE!

YOU'RE *MAD, BATMAN* --I...

MAD? YOU'RE DARNED RIGHT, I'M MAD...*FIGHTING MAD!* THE WAY I AM WHENEVER SOME *TWO-BIT* PUNK LIKE *YOU* TRIES TO SET HIMSELF UP AS A TIN-PLATED GOD!

BRAVE SENTIMENTS, *BATMAN!* BUT, IN THE END, IT IS ALWAYS THE STRONGEST, THE MOST CUNNING, THE QUICKEST TO STRIKE--UNMERCIFULLY--THAT *TRIUMPHS!*

GRANG

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY *NOW, TZIN-TZIN?*

I BEG TO DIFFER WITH YOU, *BATMAN!* IT'S--WHAT DO *YOU* HAVE TO SAY NOW!

13

YOU ARE A FLY IN THE OINTMENT, *BATMAN*--A THORN IN MY SIDE--EASILY DEALT WITH! THERE SHALL BE NO MORE TRAPS--NO MORE ILLUSIONS! I SHALL END IT HERE... QUICKLY... CLEANLY... *WITH A BULLET!*

GOOD GOING, *ROBIN!* I SAW YOU REGAINING CON-SCIOUSNESS SO I STALLED FOR TIME!

NOT SO FAST, *BIG T...* YOU FORGOT ABOUT LITTLE OL' *ME...* AND YOU KNOW WHAT *THAT* DOES TO MY EGO!

MAN, AM I EVER GLAD TO GET OUT OF *THAT* PLACE... IT GAVE ME THE *CREEPS!*

14

HA HA HA HA HA

WHAT...? LAUGHTER-- COMING FROM THE HOUSE!

HA HA HA H

TZIN-TZIN!?!

BUT IT CAN'T BE... HE'S HERE WITH US!

GONE! HE GOT AWAY WHILE WE WERE DISTRACTED!

THE GROUND TREMBLES BENEATH YOUR FEET, BATMAN--THE DARK, OLD HOUSE BEGINS TO QUIVER--INTERNAL EXPLOSIONS ERUPT THROUGHOUT THE ERODING EDIFICE--THEN COLLAPSES IN A PAROXYSM OF HEAT AND FLAME...

IT'S GONE-- SCATTERED TO THE SKY!

THE FIRST BREEZE OF MORNING WHISTLES ACROSS THE HILL-- SWEEPING AWAY THE EBONY MEMORIES THAT FILLED THE NIGHT BEFORE! THE BATMOBILE ROARS QUIETLY AWAY--AND IS LOST IN THE FIRST MISTS OF DAWN...

15

The End

DC DETECTIVE COMICS

APR. NO. 410

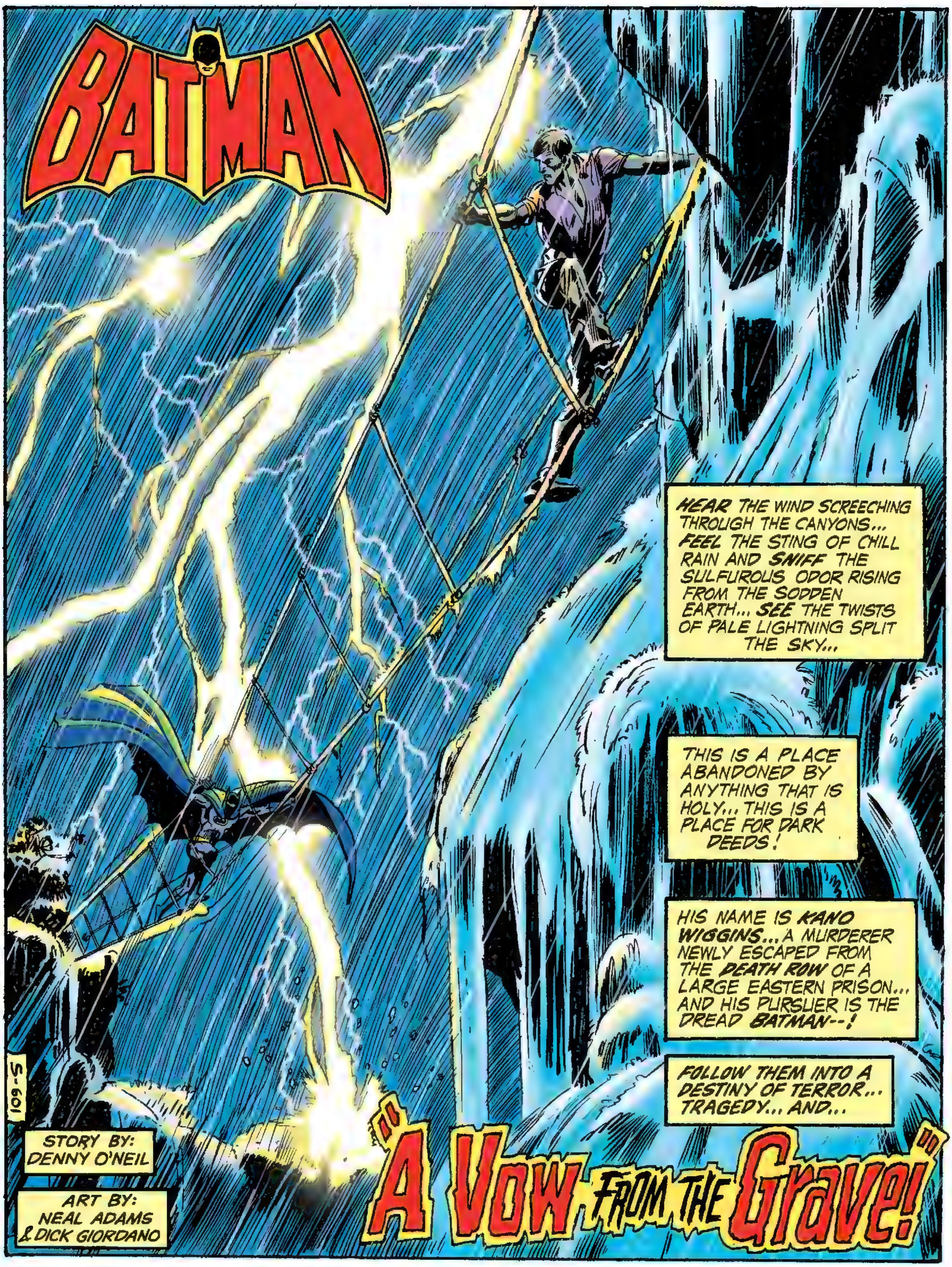
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Detective Comics presents BATMAN AND BATGIRL

STOP, BATMAN!

ONE MORE STEP AND THIS *FREAK* DIES!

S720


BATMAN
HEAR THE WIND SCREECHING THROUGH THE CANYONS... FEEL THE STING OF CHILL RAIN AND SNIFF THE SULFUROUS ODOR RISING FROM THE SODDEN EARTH... SEE THE TWISTS OF PALE LIGHTNING SPLIT THE SKY...
THIS IS A PLACE ABANDONED BY ANYTHING THAT IS HOLY... THIS IS A PLACE FOR DARK DEEDS!
HIS NAME IS KANO WIGGINS... A MURDERER NEWLY ESCAPED FROM THE DEATH ROW OF A LARGE EASTERN PRISON... AND HIS PURSUER IS THE DREAD BATMAN--!
FOLLOW THEM INTO A DESTINY OF TERROR... TRAGEDY... AND...
S-60 109
STORY BY: DENNY O'NEIL
ART BY: NEAL ADAMS & DICK GIORDANO
"A VOW FROM THE Grave!"

WIGGINS IS THE FIRST TO REACH SAFETY! DESPERATELY HE CUTS AT THE THICK ROPE SECURING THE BRIDGE...ONE STRAND THEN ANOTHER PARTS UNDER HIS BLADE...

BUT WIGGINS' NEMESIS IS NO ORDINARY MORTAL! NO, THIS IS **THE BATMAN** --VETERAN OF A THOUSAND PERILS, RELENTLESS AVENGER OF WRONGS! WITHOUT HESITATION, HIS SUPERBLY TRAINED MUSCLES REACT, LAUNCHING HIM ACROSS THE YAWNING EMPTI-NESS...

...HIS CABLED FINGERS FIND A HOLD, CLAMP TIGHT ON A RAIN-SLICKENED BRANCH...

...A HEARTBEAT LATER, HE VAULTS UPWARD, TO FACE HIS FOE--AND WHEN HE SPEAKS, HIS VOICE IS AS STEEL...

IT'S OVER, WIGGINS! YOU'VE GIVEN ME A GOOD RUN, BUT THE RACE IS FINISHED-- AND YOU'VE **LOST!**

UH-UH, **BATMAN!** I USED TO BE THE BEST KNIFE-MAN IN **HELL'S KITCHEN**--AND I AIN'T **ABOUT** TO BE TAKEN!

2

YOU'VE *FORGOTTEN* YOUR SKILLS, WIGGINS! YOU'RE *SLOW*-- *CLUMSY*--

--AND I'M *NOT*!

GNNH!

*SUDDENLY, A HAM-HEAVY FIST SLAMS INTO THE **BATMAN** FROM BEHIND, CAUSING PAIN TO EXPLODE BEHIND HIS EYES...*

WHEN HIS VISION CLEARS, THE MURDERER IS GONE! IN HIS PLACE STANDS A HUGE FIGURE OF A MAN, LOOMING LIKE A NIGHTMARISH GIANT...

YOU, *BAT-THING*... YOU GET AWAY FROM HERE!

*DOESN'T MAKE **SENSE**! WHERE DID THIS... CREATURE... COME FROM? AND WHY DID HE HELP **KANO**--?*

I MEAN YOU NO HARM, FRIEND! STAND ASIDE...

NO! YOU GO AWAY!!

*IF HE EVER CONNECTS, THEY'LL HAVE TO PUT ME BACK TOGETHER WITH **BALING WIRE**!*

3

I DARE NOT START WITH HIM! ALL HE'D NEED IS ONE SOLID **BLOW** TO **ZAP** ME!

YET I CAN'T CHANCE REALLY **HURTING** HIM--NOT UNTIL I KNOW **WHO** HE IS!

MAYBE--JUST **MAYBE**--A JUDO-**SLEEPER-HOLD** WILL WORK... PROVIDED I CAN HANG ON LONG ENOUGH FOR IT TO TAKE **EFFECT!**

FURIOUSLY, THE GIANT BUCKS AND SQUIRMS! BUT **THE BATMAN** CLINGS TIGHT--AND WITHIN A MINUTE, THE BIG MAN SIGHS, COLLAPSING LIKE A PUNCTURED BALLOON...

GASPING FOR BREATH, THE CAPED CRUSADER RISES FROM HIS STUNNED OPPONENT! HE HEARS A STIRRING IN THE UNDERBRUSH, LIFTS HIS EYES, AND IN THE GLARE OF A LIGHTNING FLASH, SEES A COLDLY BIZARRE SIGHT...

HE WHIPPED **GOLIATH!** NEVER THOUGHT IT COULD BE DONE!

IS THAT A **MAN**--OR SOME KINDA **BIRD?**

WHATEVER IT IS--IT **SCARES** ME!

4

NOTHING TO BE FRIGHTENED OF, *MAUD!* 'LESS I MISS MY GUESS, THIS FELLA'S *THE BATMAN!*

THAT'S RIGHT-- AND WHO ARE *YOU?*

ME, I'M CALLED *CHARLEY BONES!* MY LADY FRIEND IS *MAUD*... AND THE BOY ON THE GROUND IS *FLIPPY!*

THE FELLA YOU KNOCKED OUT GOES BY THE NAME OF *GOLIATH!*

WE'RE PART OF A CARNIVAL SIDE-SHOW... OR WE *WERE--*

--TILL THE SHOW FOLDED AND WE GOT *STRANDED* HERE! WE'VE BEEN LIVING IN AN ABANDONED BUILDING YONDER!

GOLIATH, HE SPOOKS KINDA *EASY!* I RECKON THAT'S WHY HE TOOK AFTER YOU! HE DIDN'T MEAN ANY WRONG!

I UNDERSTAND. TELL HIM HE'S FORGIVEN WHEN HE WAKES UP!

I'D DO IT *PERSONALLY*... BUT THERE'S A *KILLER* LOOSE! AND WHILE HE'S FREE, WE'RE *ALL* IN DANGER!

PERHAPS I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN--!

LIKE A WRAITH, THE BATMAN VANISHES INTO THE WOODS--

...TO BEGIN ANEW HIS GRIM QUEST!

TWIGS BROKEN... LEAVES TRAMPLED! WIGGINS WENT THIS WAY--AND RECENTLY!

HE'S PROBABLY TOO PANICKED TO BOTHER COVERING HIS TRAIL!

5

AFTER AN HOUR OF TRACKING...

NOW THE PATH LEADS TOWARD THOSE OLD BUILDINGS... MUST BE WHERE THE CARNIVAL PEOPLE ARE STAYING!

LOOKS LIKE A GHOST TOWN...

E-YAAAAAA

A SCREAM--! COMING FROM THAT TOWN HALL!

SWIFT AS A SHADOW, THE BATMAN SPEEDS TO THE ANCIENT STRUCTURE, AND FINDS WITHIN--

OH, CHARLEY!-- CHARLEY!

HE'S DEAD-- HANGED!

THERE, THERE, MAUDY... I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU!

KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF! I WON'T TAKE COMFORT!

I LOVED HIM...

THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO FOR HER--EXCEPT MAYBE BRING CHARLEY'S KILLER TO JUSTICE!

6

THE ROPE THE KILLER USED WAS CUT FROM THIS OLD **BELL-PULL...**

POOR CHARLEY WAS APPARENTLY TAKEN BY **SURPRISE--**

I'VE GOT REAL **PROBLEMS...** AN ESCAPED FUGITIVE TO NAIL--AND A **MURDER** TO SOLVE!

I HAVE A HUNCH THAT IF I DO THE **FIRST,** I'LL AUTOMATICALLY DO THE **SECOND...**

MISTER BATMAN, I WANNA **APOLOGIZE** FOR TRYIN' TO STOMP YOU! IT'S JUST I DIDN'T KNOW THE GUY YOU WAS CHASIN' WAS A **CROOK--**

--AN I HAD NO **IDEA** HE'D KILL MY FRIEND **BONES!**

DID ANY OF YOU SEE WHICH DIRECTION WIGGINS WENT?

NOT ME!

ME NEITHER!

HOW ABOUT **FLIPPY?**

HE CAN'T TALK...AN' HE'S NOT TOO BRIGHT IN THE HEAD!

NO WAY OF TELLIN'! NATURE SHORTCHANGED THE POOR TYKE WORSE 'N THE REST OF US--

I HAVE THE FEELING HE'S TRYING TO *COMMUNICATE* WITH US...

RRRRRRR

WHAT WAS THAT-- *NOISE?*

SOUNDS LIKE SOMEBODY'S FOOLIN' WITH OUR *TRUCK*--

THE ENGINE'S BROKE, IS WHY WE'RE STUCK HERE! BUT I RECKON THE *BATTERY* STILL WORKS!

STAY PUT--*ALL* OF YOU! WHATEVER HAPPENS-- *DON'T LEAVE!*

*THAT WAS ONE OF THE **TOUGHEST** DECISIONS I'VE EVER HAD TO MAKE-- WHETHER TO STAY WITH THEM...*

*OR CHARGE **WIGGINS!** I CAN ONLY **PRAY** I'VE DONE THE RIGHT THING!*

*HE'S STILL IN THE VAN! HASN'T REALIZED YET IT'S **KAPUT**...*

JUDGING FROM YOUR PAST RECORD, WIGGINS-- I SUPPOSE YOU WON'T WANT TO SURRENDER QUIETLY?

LIKE I TOLD YA-- I AIN'T GOIN' BACK TO THAT STINKIN' *DEATH-CELL!*

8

THAT'S EXACTLY...

...WHAT I WAS...

...AFRAID YOU'D SAY!

NOW THAT I'VE HAD ANOTHER LOOK AT THIS CRUD, MY SUSPICIONS ARE *CONFIRMED!*

KANO WIGGINS HAS BEEN GUILTY OF MANY CRIMES IN HIS LIFE--

--BUT THE SLAYING OF *CHARLEY BONES* ISN'T AMONG THEM!

SOME TIME WITHIN THE PAST TEN MINUTES, THE BATMAN MADE AN IMPORTANT OBSERVATION--TWO, IN FACT! HAVE YOU?

I SEE YOU CAUGHT THE FILTHY ROTTEN SCUM THAT DONE IN MY *CHARLEY!*

HE'S ROTTEN, ALL RIGHT-- BUT HE'S DONE *NOTHING* TO YOUR FRIEND!

WHERE ARE *FLIPPY* AND *GOLIATH*?

9

DON'T EXACTLY KNOW! I BEEN CRYIN' SO MUCH I HAVEN'T NOTICED!

I SUPPOSE *GOLIATH* TOOK THE LAD UP THERE, SOMEWHERES!

THEN *FLIPPY'S* IN *TROUBLE...*

WATCH OUT!

CH-WOKKK

...BECAUSE NEITHER *FLIPPY, YOU*, NOR WIGGINS COULD HAVE REACHED *HIGH ENOUGH* TO CUT THE ROPE USED IN THE HANGING!

IT WAS SEVERED AT LEAST *EIGHT FEET* ABOVE THE FLOOR--AND THAT MEANS...

YOU CAN'T *HOPE* TO ESCAPE, *GOLIATH!* COME DOWN-- DON'T DIG YOUR-SELF IN DEEPER!

NAW... YOU WANT ME, YOU COME *UP!*

10

IF THAT'S HOW IT *HAS* TO BE...

THAT'S HOW IT *HAS* TO BE! YOU CAN BET ON IT!

I EXPECTED HIM TO ATTACK ME WHILE I WAS ON THE LADDER! SCORE ONE SURPRISE FOR THE GIANT!

I'M *HERE*... NOW WHERE ARE *YOU*?

OVER THIS WAY, *BATMAN!*

I AIN'T GOIN' TO FIGHT YOU AGAIN... YOU'RE TOO BLASTED *TRICKY!*--

INSTEAD, I'M GIVIN' YOU A CHOICE-- EITHER YOU STEP OFF THIS TOWER INTO EMPTY AIR...

...OR I DROP FLIPPY!

YOU'LL KILL HIM *ANYWAY!*

MAYBE SO, MAYBE NO! YOU DO AS I ASK, YOU'LL AT LEAST BUY HIM ANOTHER MINUTE!

I HEARD LOTS ABOUT YOU! SOME SAY YOU'RE A CROOK, LIKE THAT GUY YOU CHASED...

OTHERS HOLD THAT YOU'RE PRACTICALLY A *SAINT.* WHICH IS IT?

NEITHER! BUT I CAN'T LET YOU DESTROY AN INNOCENT BY-STANDER--NOT WHILE I'M ALIVE!

I'LL DO AS YOU DEMAND! BUT I SWEAR YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT!

CALL IT A VOW...

...FROM THE GRAVE!

BOY, YOU KNOW I DON'T WANT TO DO BAD TO YOU...ANY MORE THAN I WANTED TO HURT BONES!

DON'T YOU SEE...I HAD TO!-- ON ACCOUNT OF I LOVE MAUD... AN' LONG AS BONES WAS BREATHIN', SHE WOULDN'T LOOK AT ME!

12

YOU SEEN IT... YOU COME NEAR LETTIN' ON WHAT YOU SEEN...SO YOU GOTTA DIE, TOO!

GOOD-BYE, BOY...

...I HOPE IT DON'T HURT!

EASY, KID! YOU'RE IN NO DANGER NOW!

I'LL PUT YOU IN A SAFE PLACE--THEN DEAL WITH *GOLIATH!*

HE'LL *PAY!* COUNT ON IT, *FLIPPY!*

13

WELL, *MAUDY*, IT'S JUST YOU AN' ME NOW...

IT'LL *NEVER* BE YOU AND ME! I CAN'T STAND THE *SIGHT* OF YOU!

LET HER *GO--!*

YOU--?! BUT YOU'RE *DEAD!* YOU *GOTTA* BE!

I VOWED TO RETURN FROM THE GRAVE-- REMEMBER?

THEN, WITHOUT WARNING, KANO WIGGINS COMES TO VIOLENT LIFE--!

GET HIM, *FREAK! FINISH HIM* FOR ME!

I PLAYED POSSUM... GAVE YOU YOUR SHOT AT HIM--*USE* IT!

I WILL, MISTER--AN' *THANKS!*

DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO RECOVER FROM THAT STOMACH-KICK...AND *GOLIATH* IS TOO *STRONG!*

NO OPPORTUNITY TO USE *JUDO*...NO *WAY* TO WIN!

YEOWW

14

YOU GAVE ME THE SECOND I NEEDED, MAUD--MADE HIM RELAX HIS GRIP JUST ENOUGH!

I HAVE NO WORDS TO THANK YOU...

HAH!-- THE GREAT *BATMAN* GOIN' SOFT FOR A BUNCH OF SCRUFFY *FREAKS!*

LISTEN, CRUD... *EITHER* OF THOSE PEOPLE IS WORTH A *TON* OF YOU! BOTH RISKED THEIR LIVES...

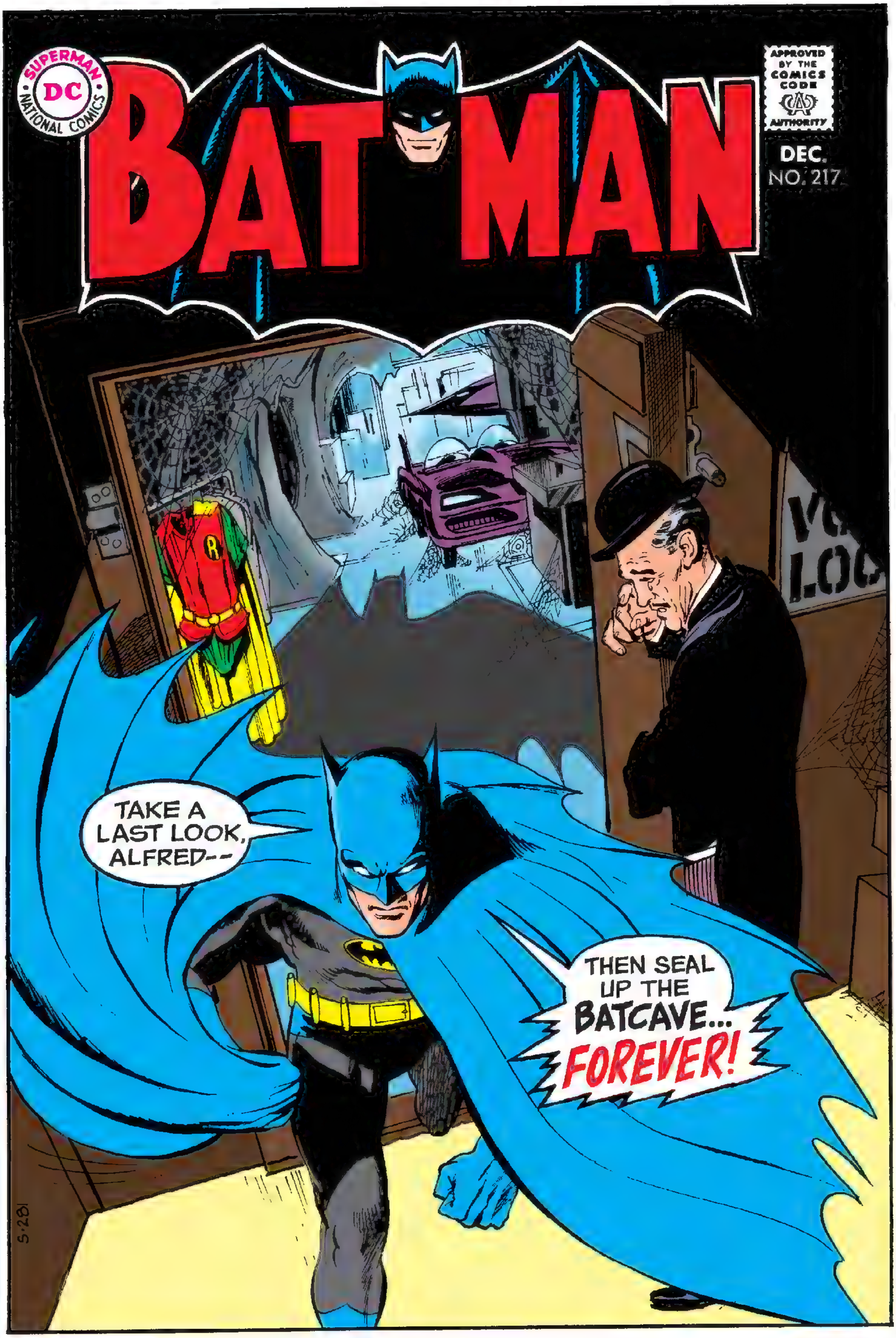
MAUD BY HELPING ME... AND *FLIPPY* BY SCRATCHING A PICTURE OF *BARBELLS* IN THE DUST--TO CLUE ME THAT A *STRONG MAN* KILLED *CHARLEY BONES!*

COURAGE -- AND *LOVE*-- COME IN STRANGE SHAPES... BUT YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND, KANO--YOU JUST WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND!

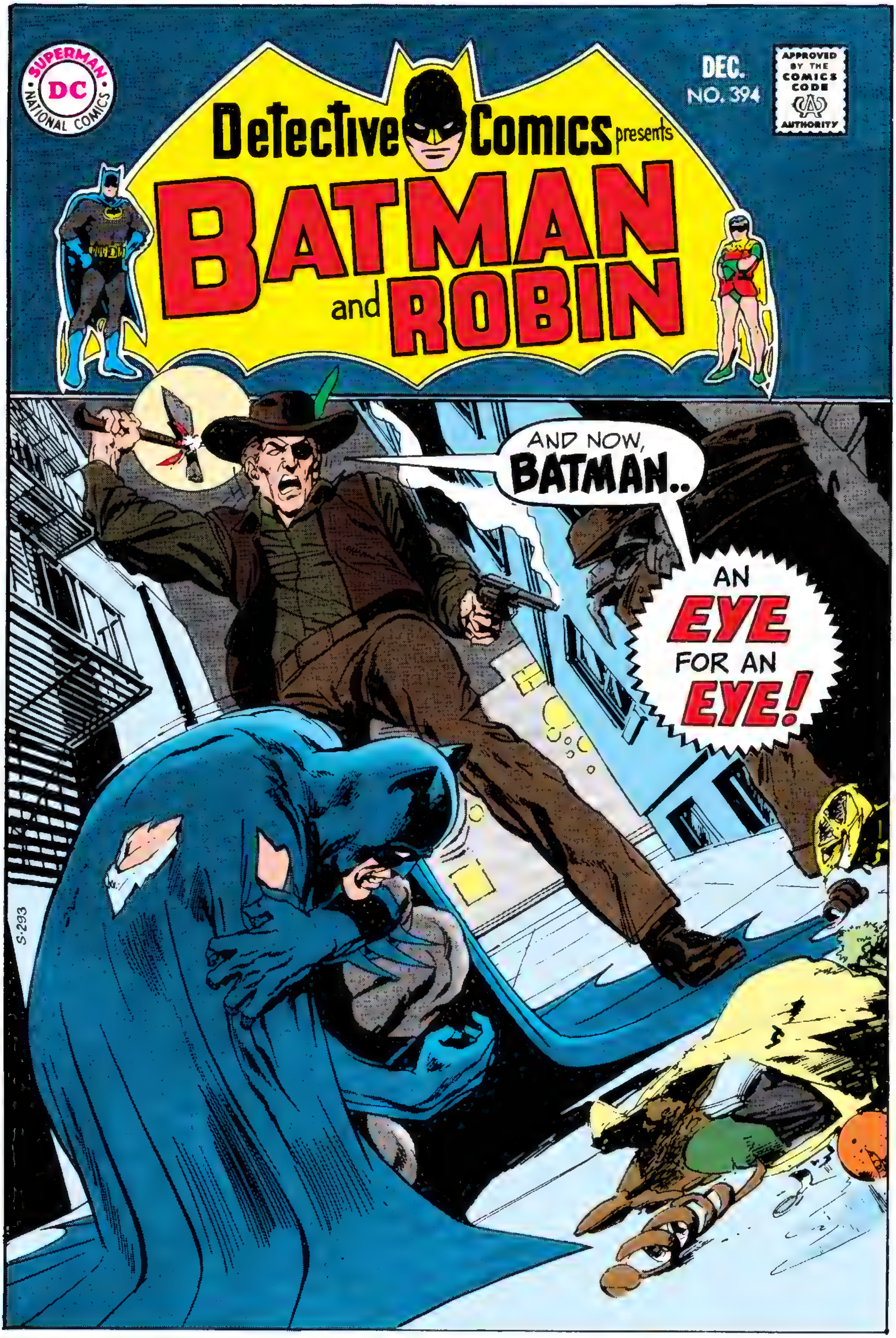
THUS, IT ENDS. TRULY THIS HAS BEEN A NIGHT OF THE DAMNED... BUT ALSO A NIGHT OF COURAGE--AND LOVE...

THE END

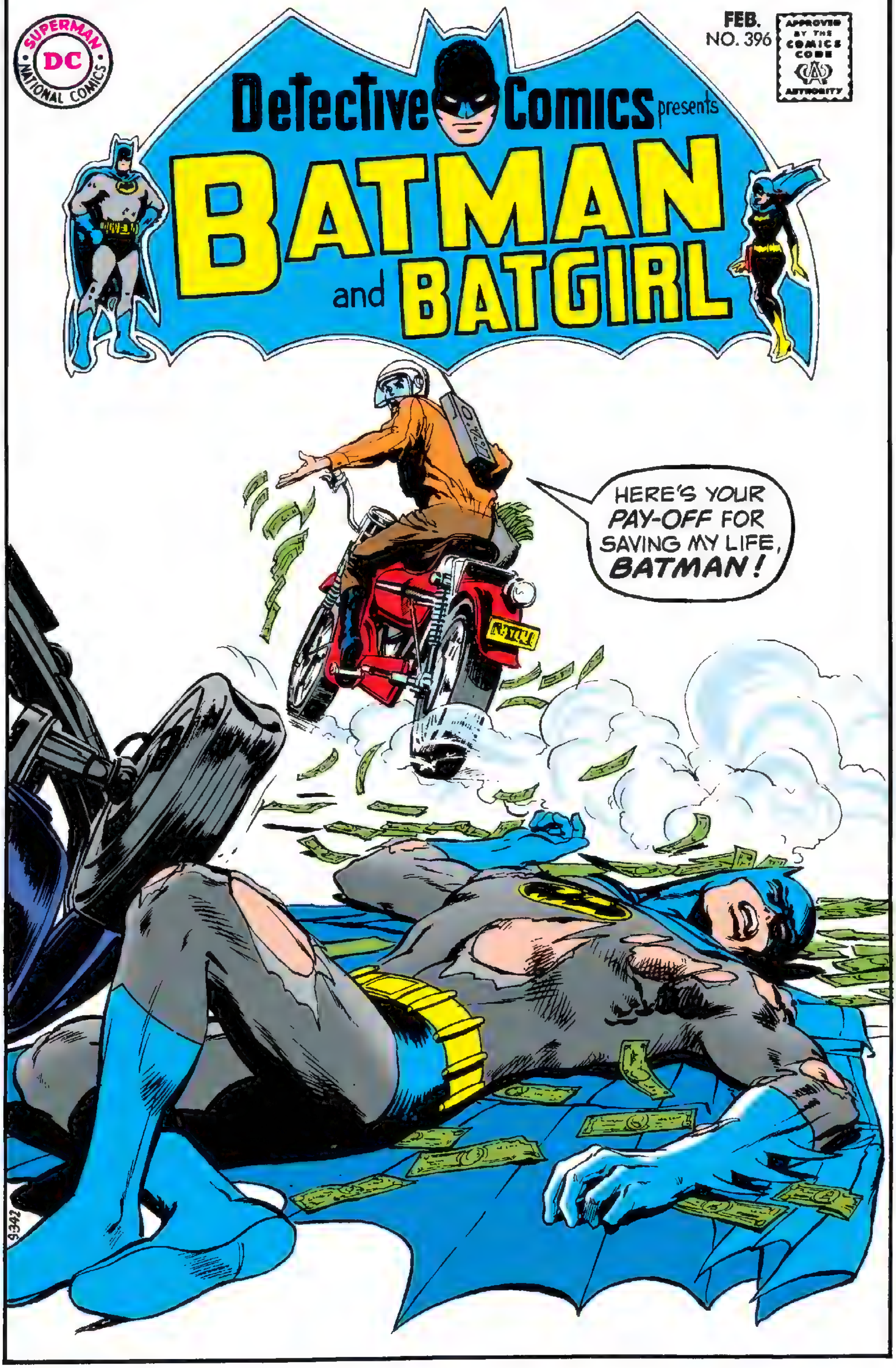
COVER GALLERY



BATMAN #217, December 1969

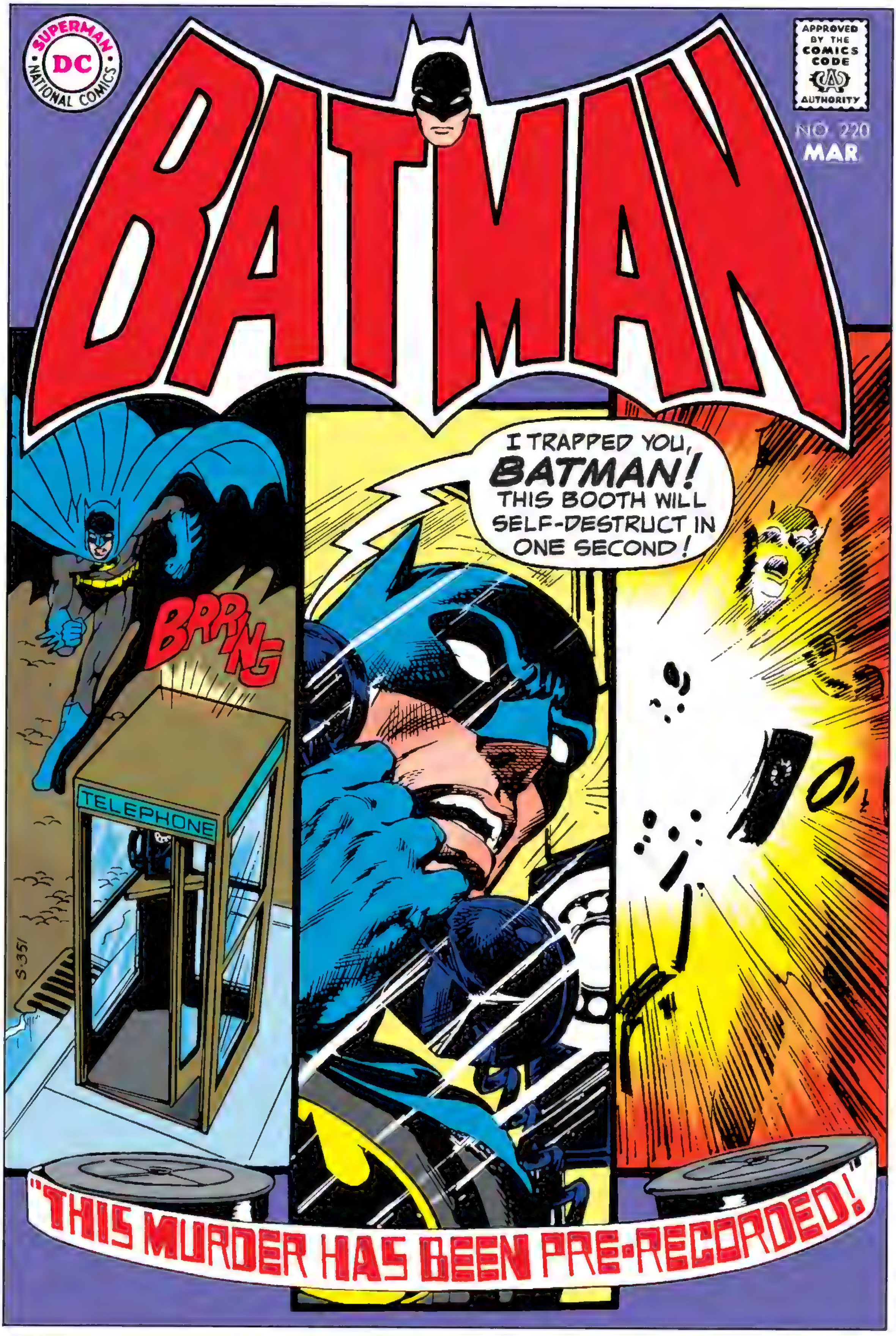


DETECTIVE COMICS #394, December 1969

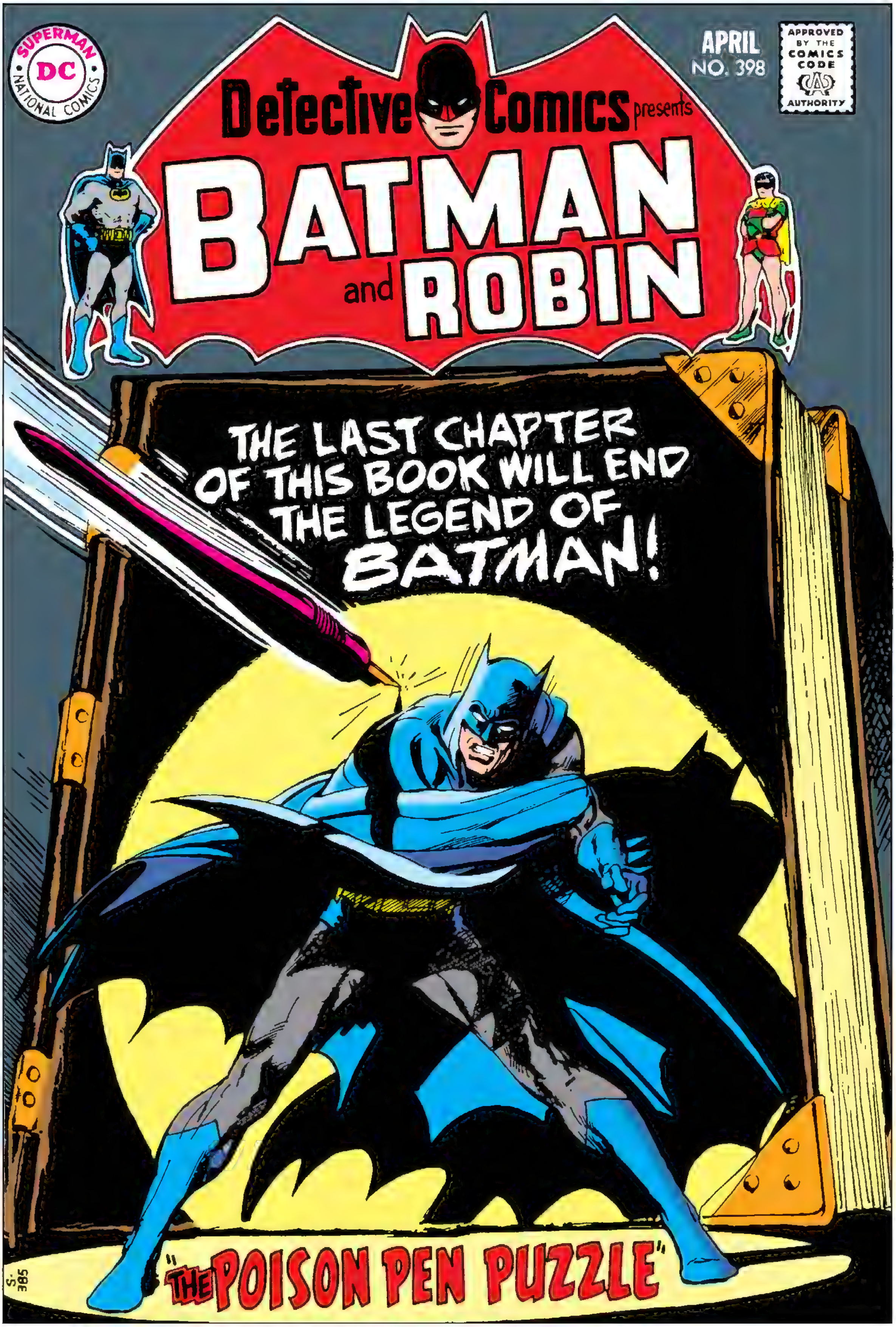


DETECTIVE COMICS #396, February 1970

THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #88, February-March 1970



BATMAN #220, March 1970



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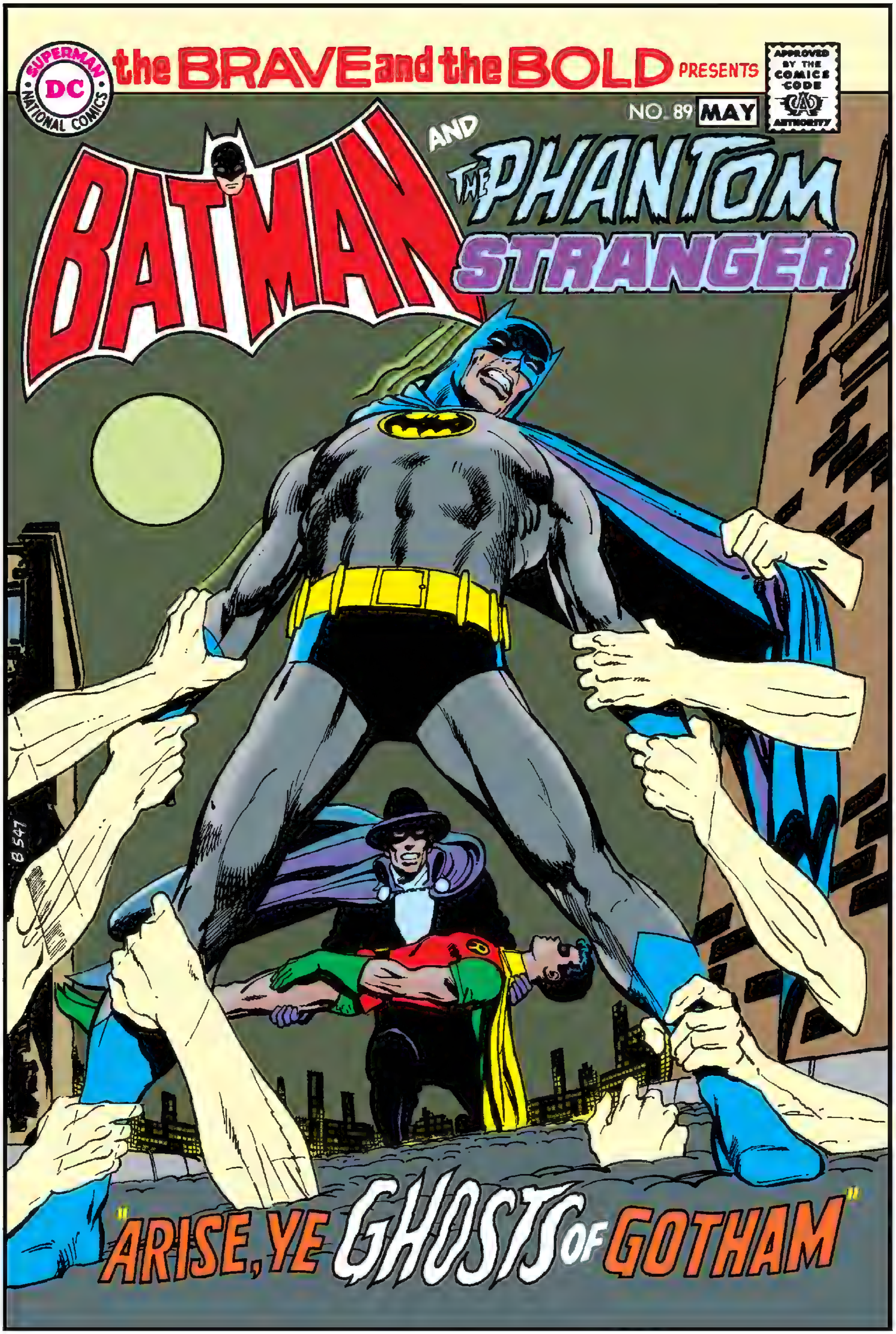
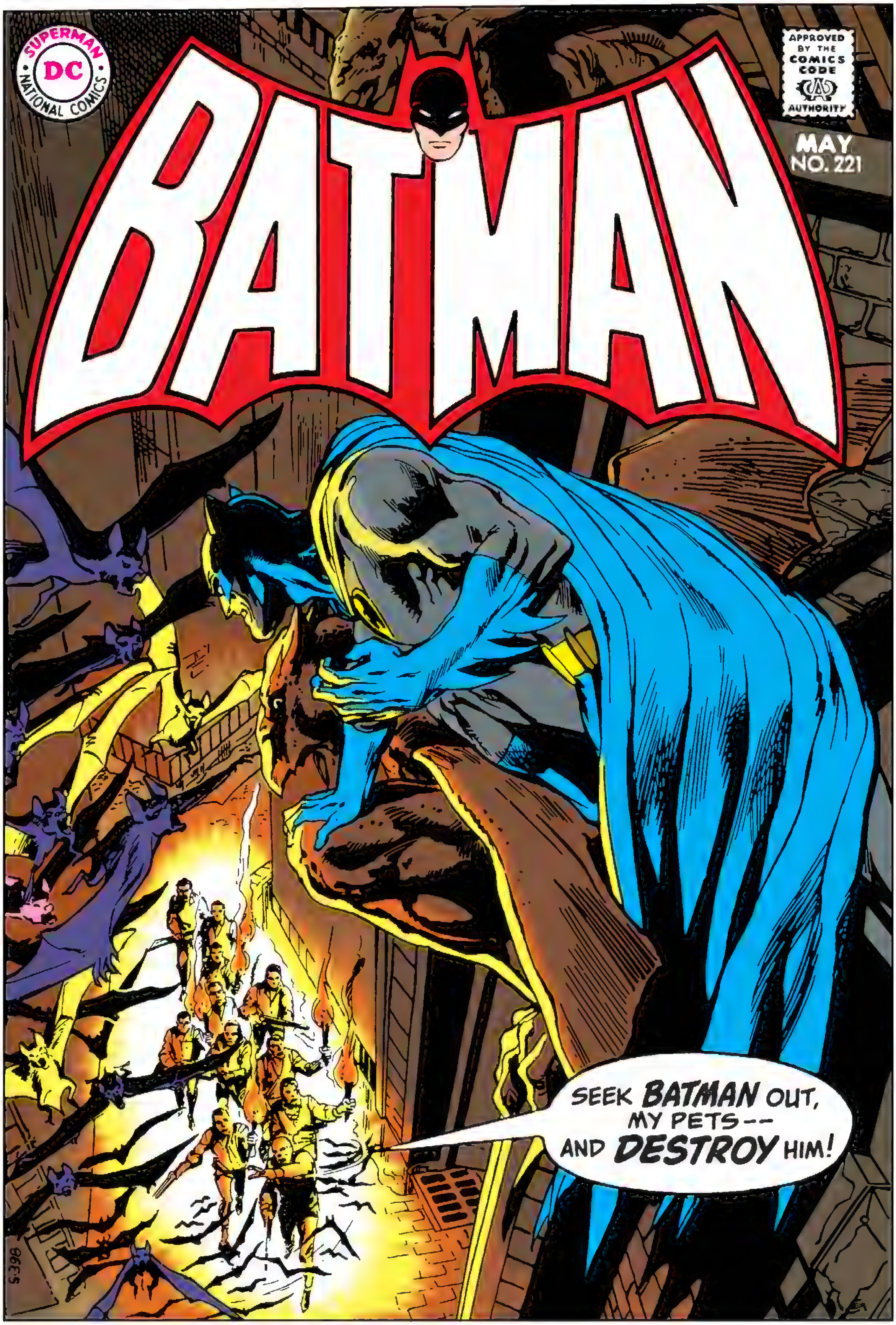


THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #89, April-May 1970



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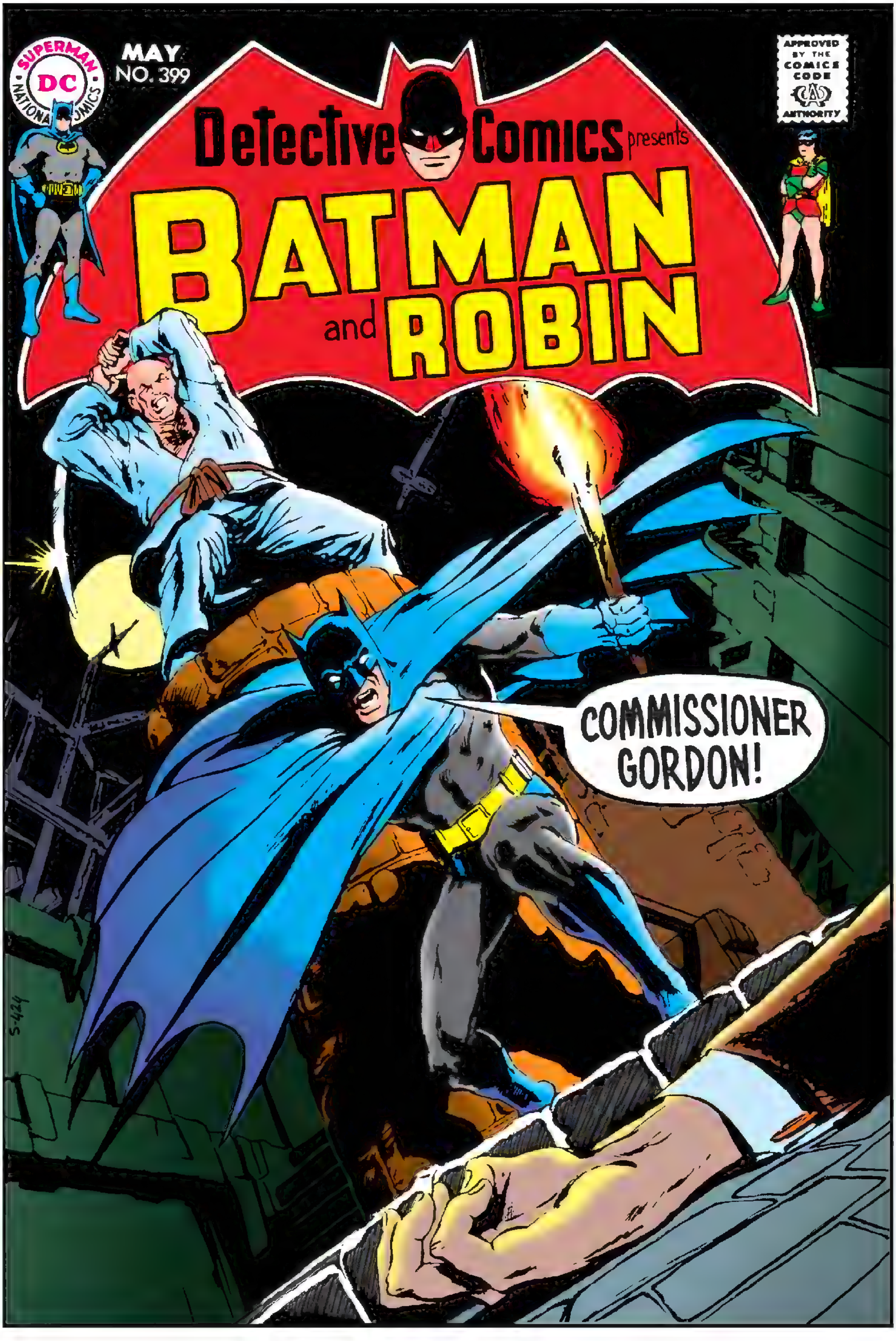

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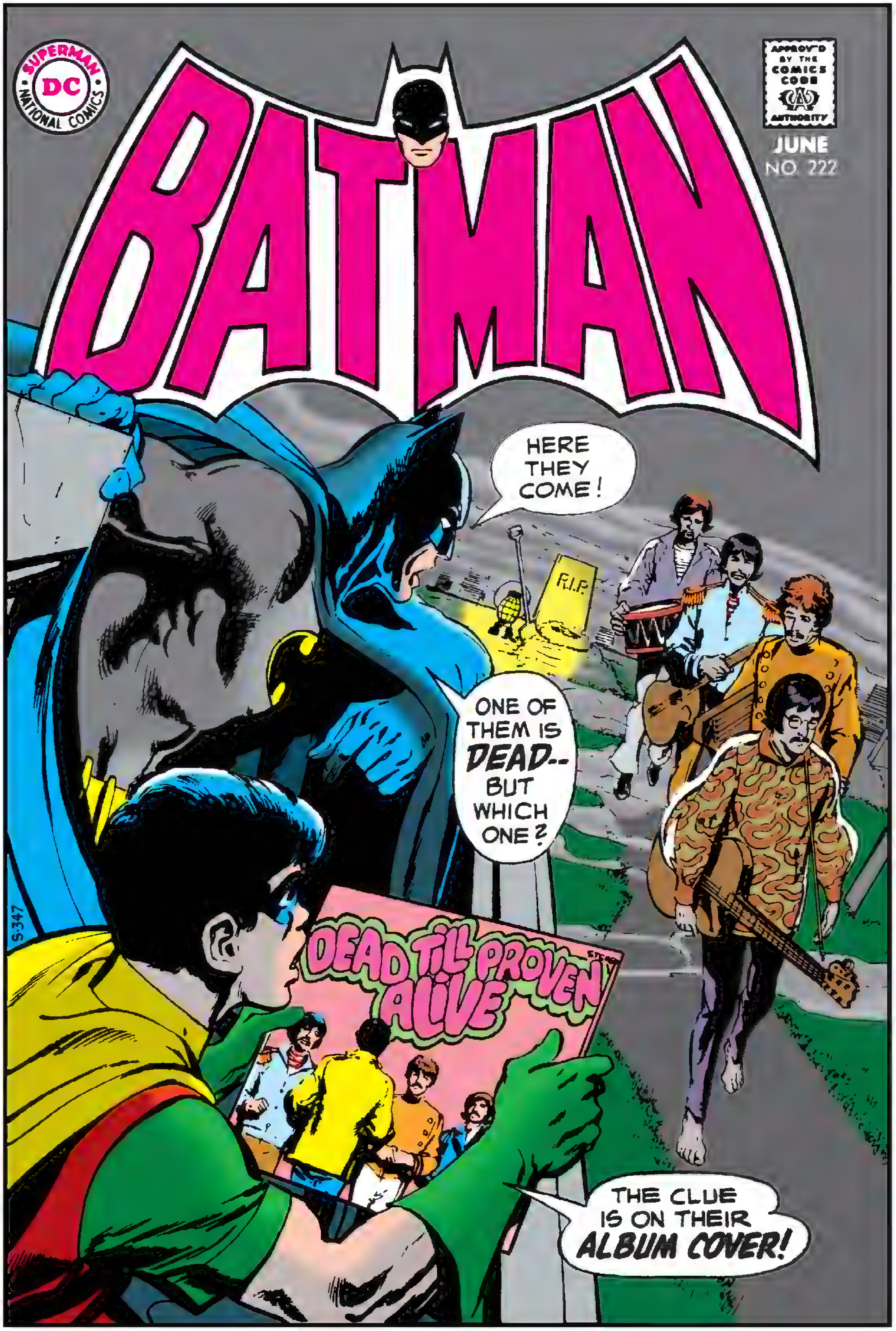
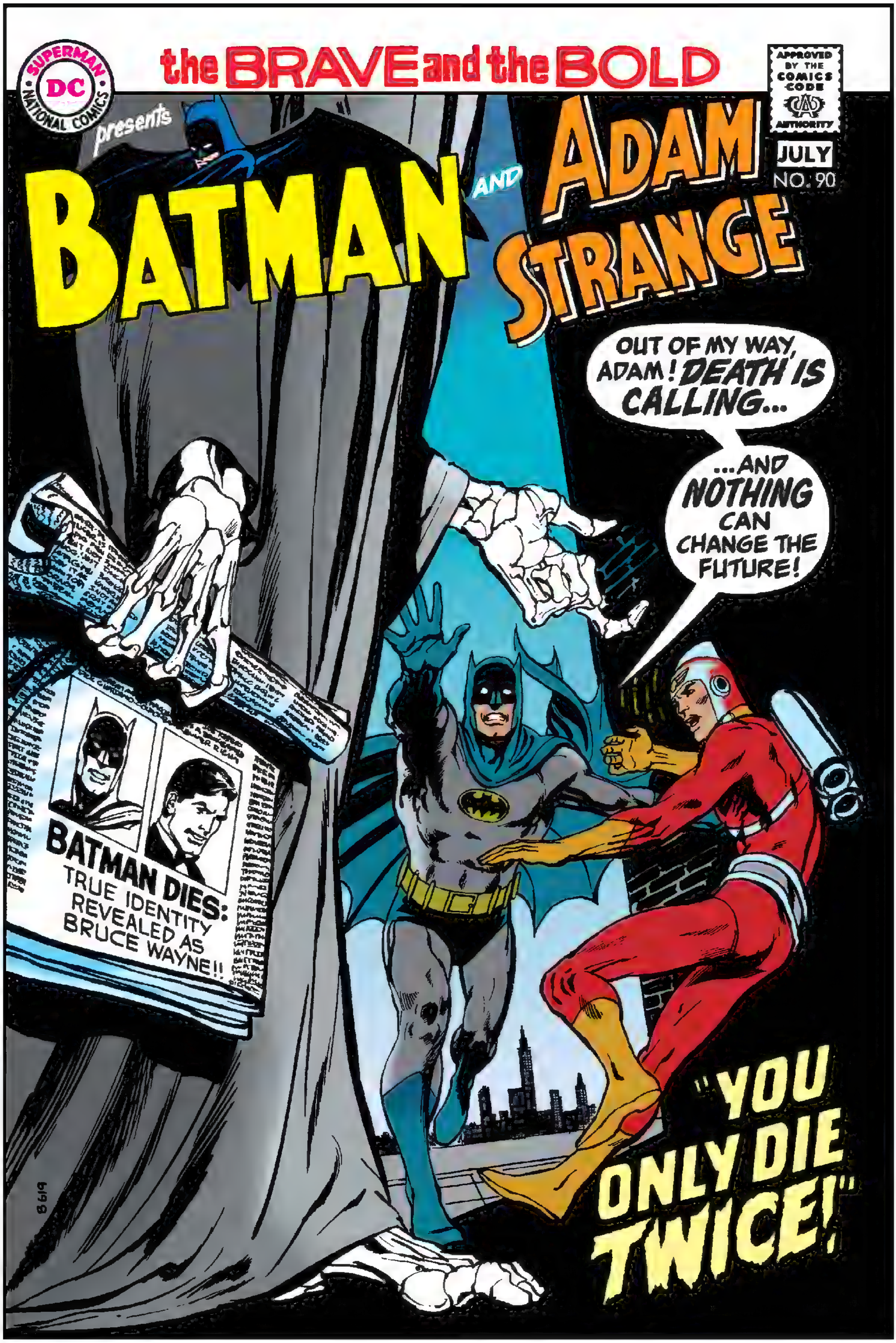
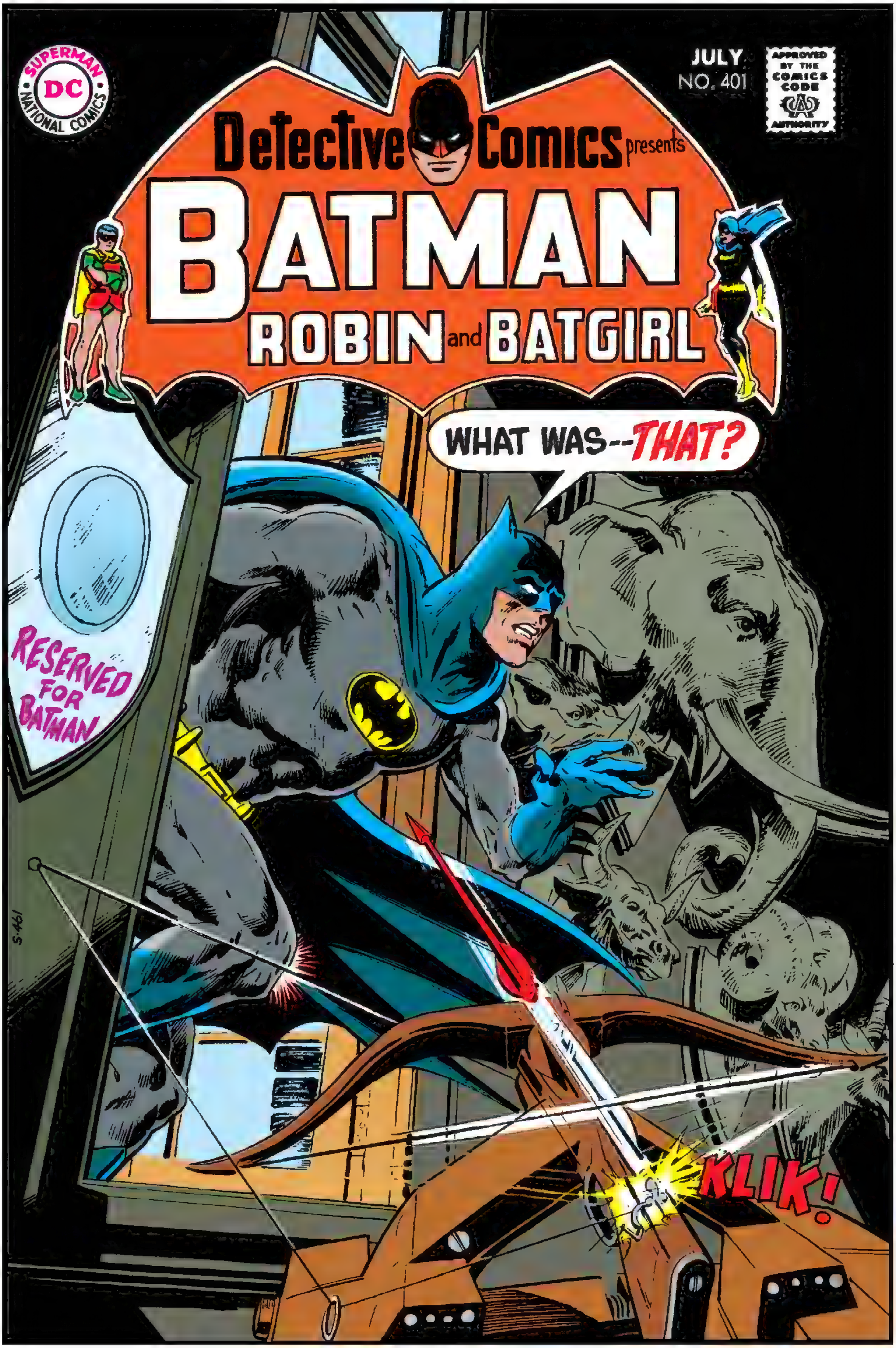


BATMAN #222, June 1970



THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #90, June-July 1970 • Layout by **Carmine Infantino**



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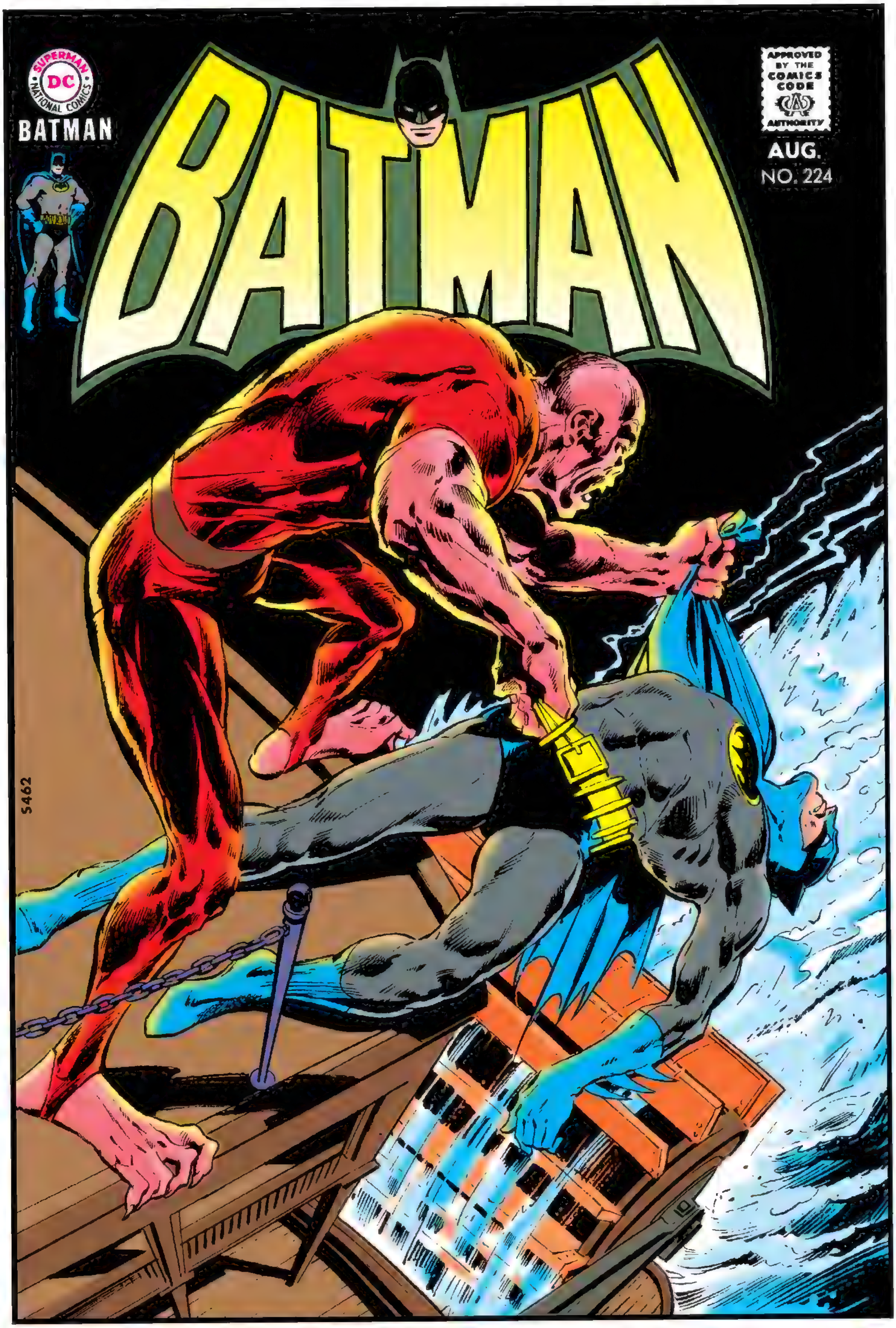
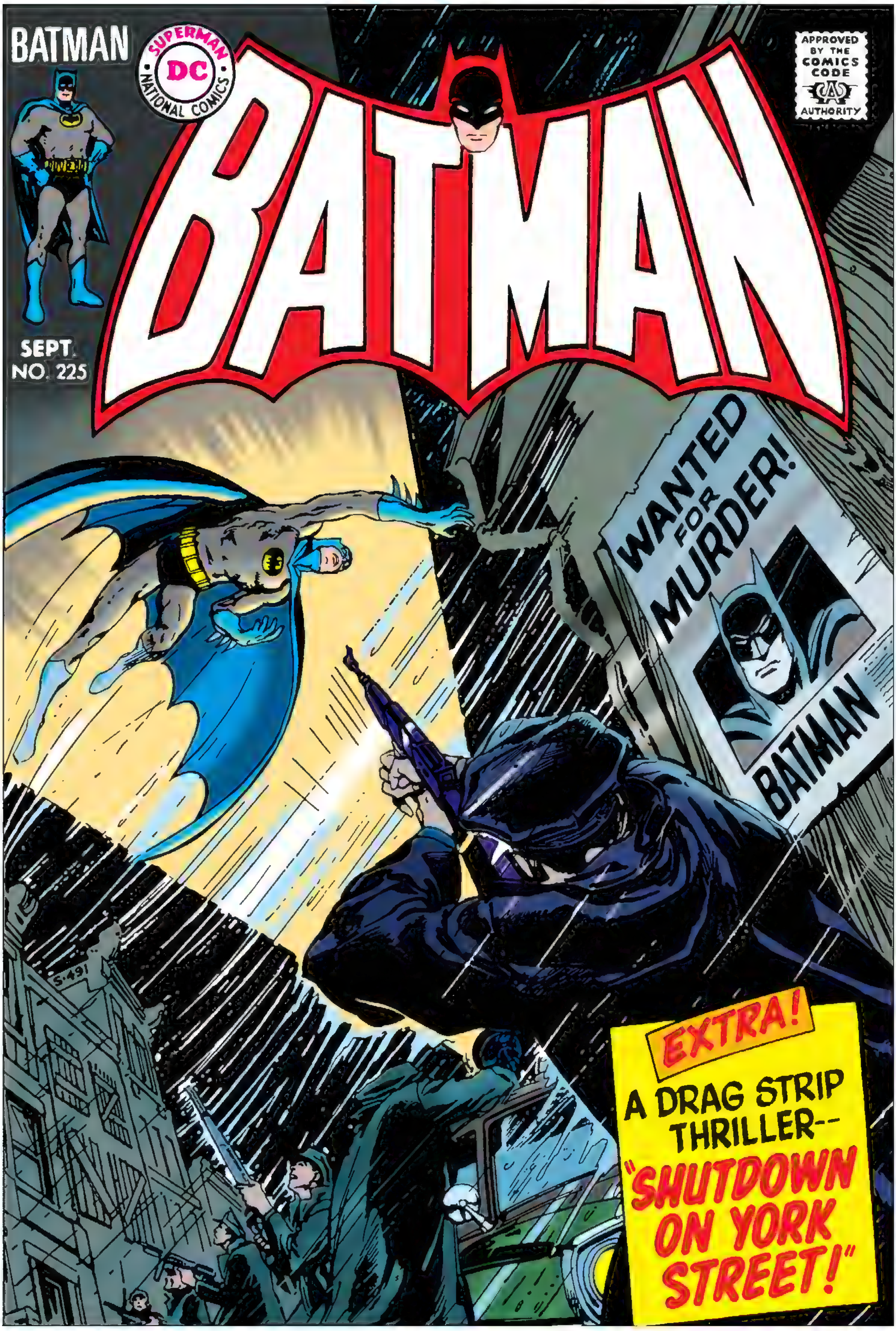


BATMAN #224, August 1970



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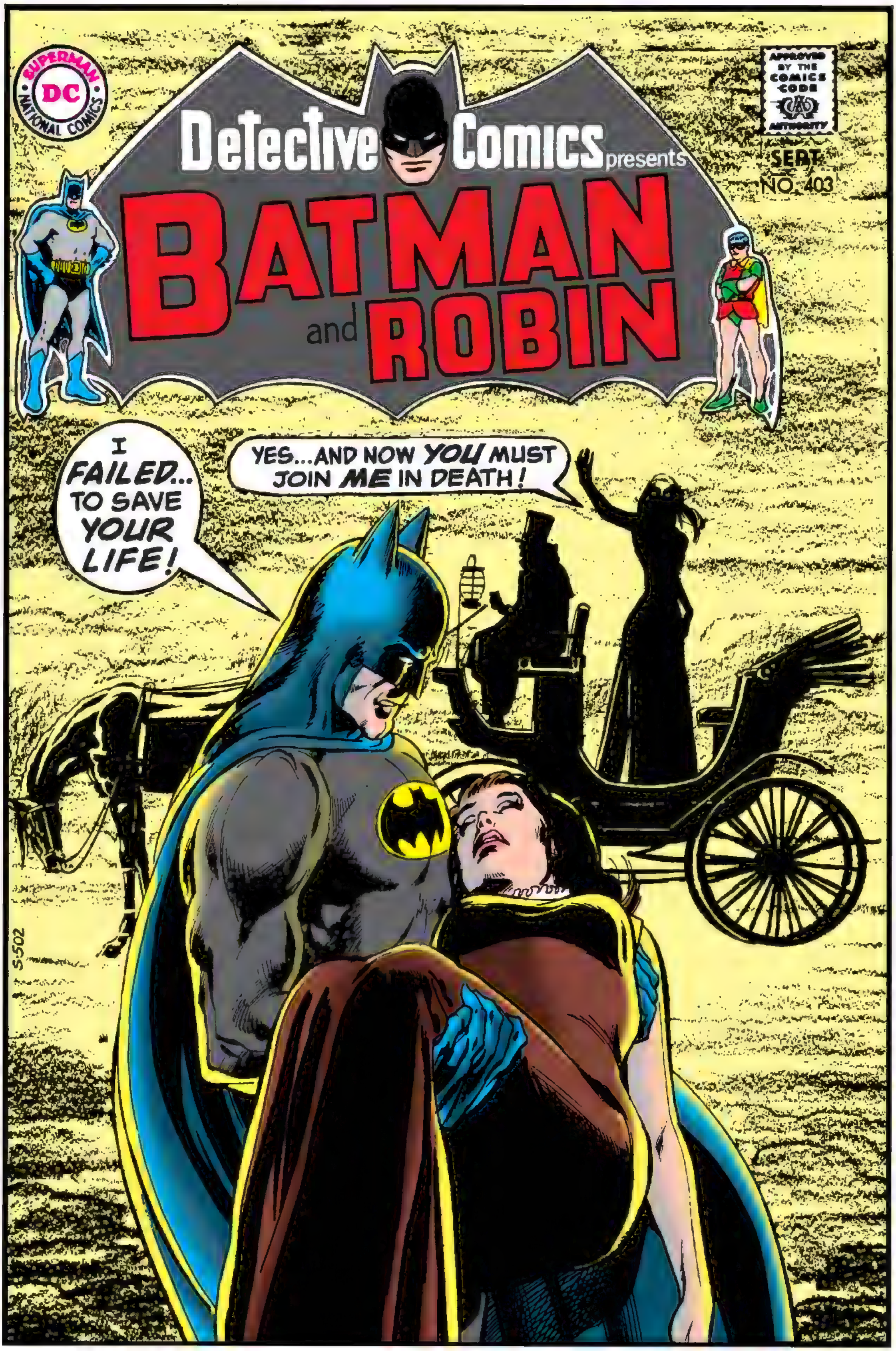
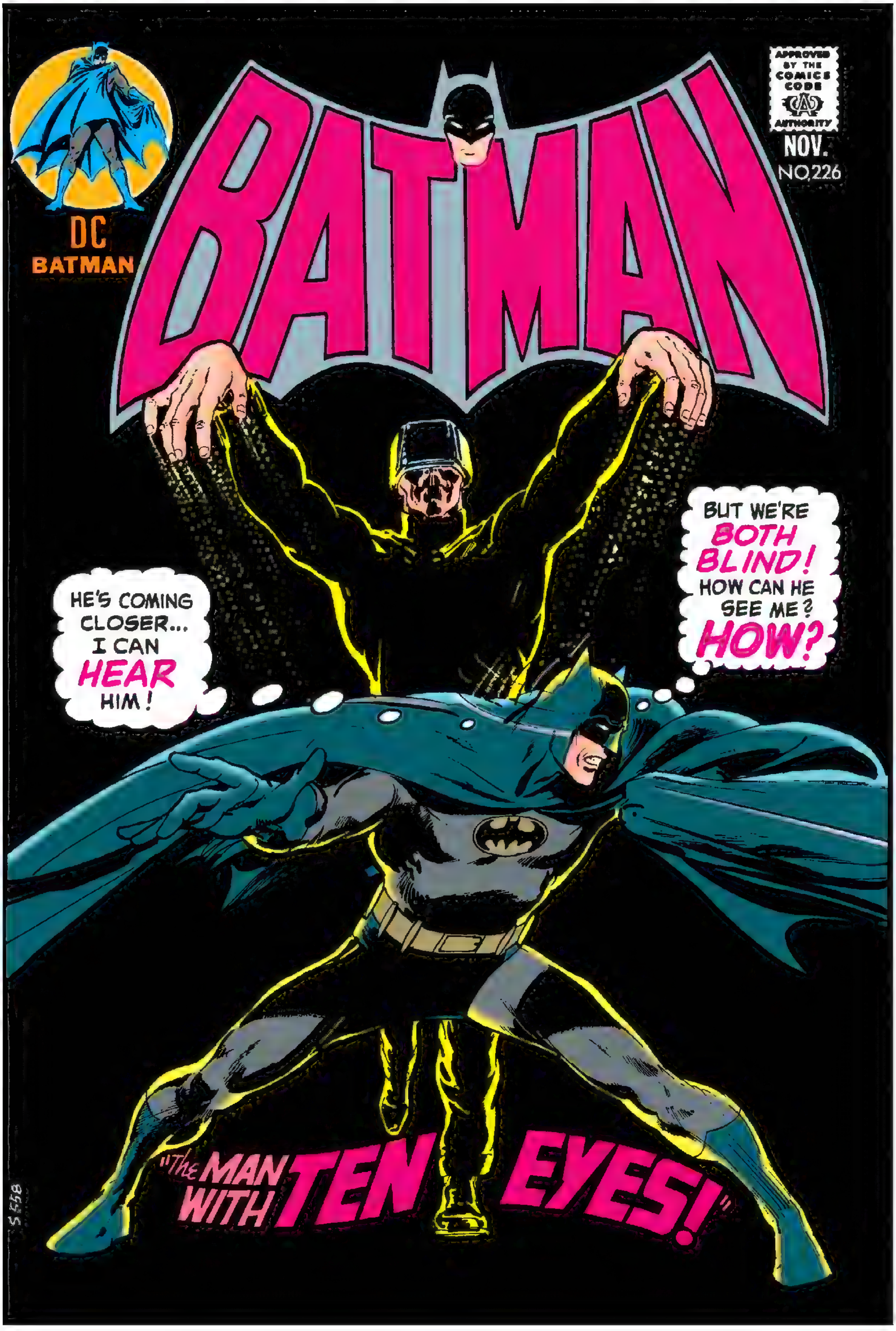
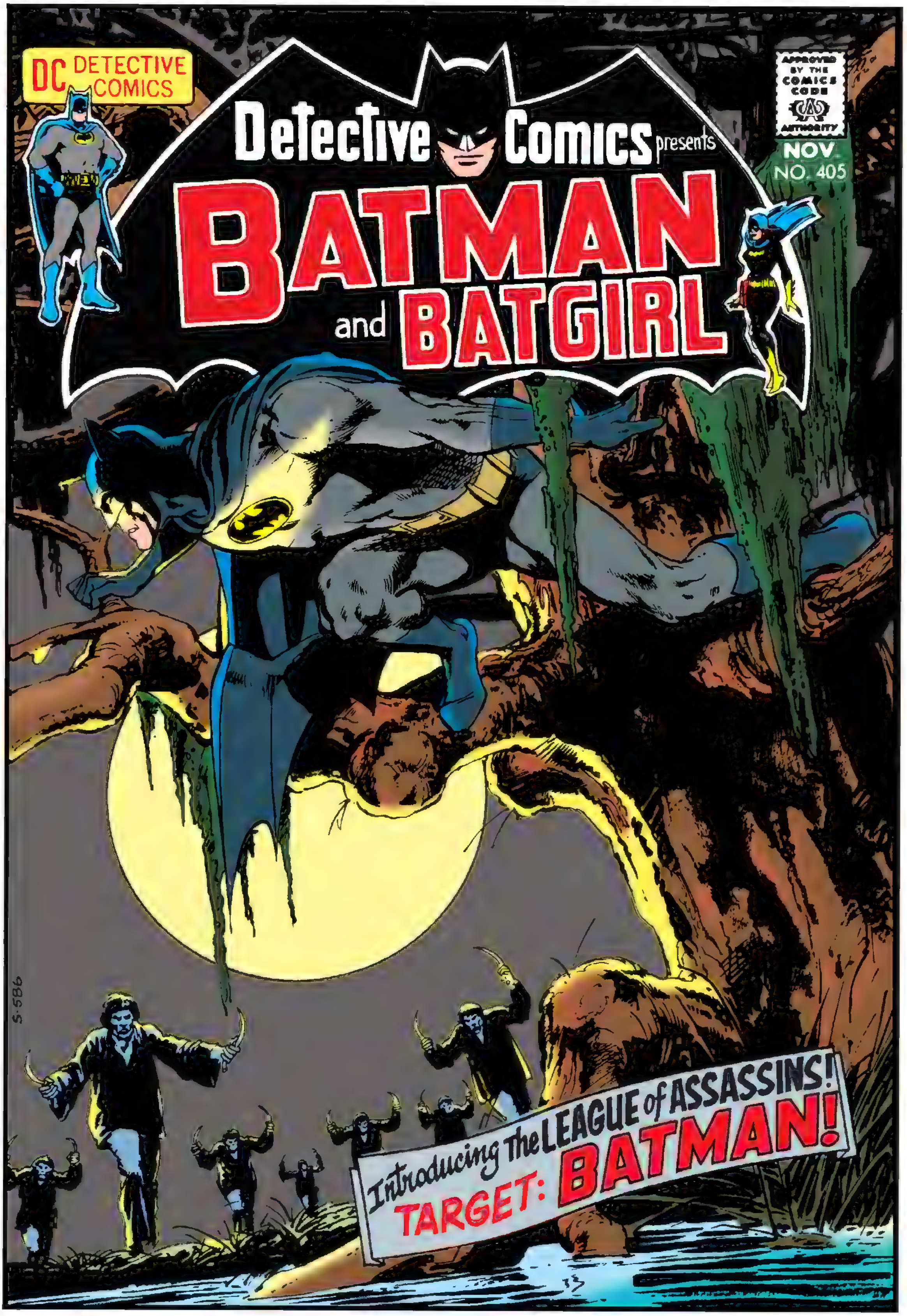


DETECTIVE COMICS #403, September 1970



BATMAN #226, November 1970



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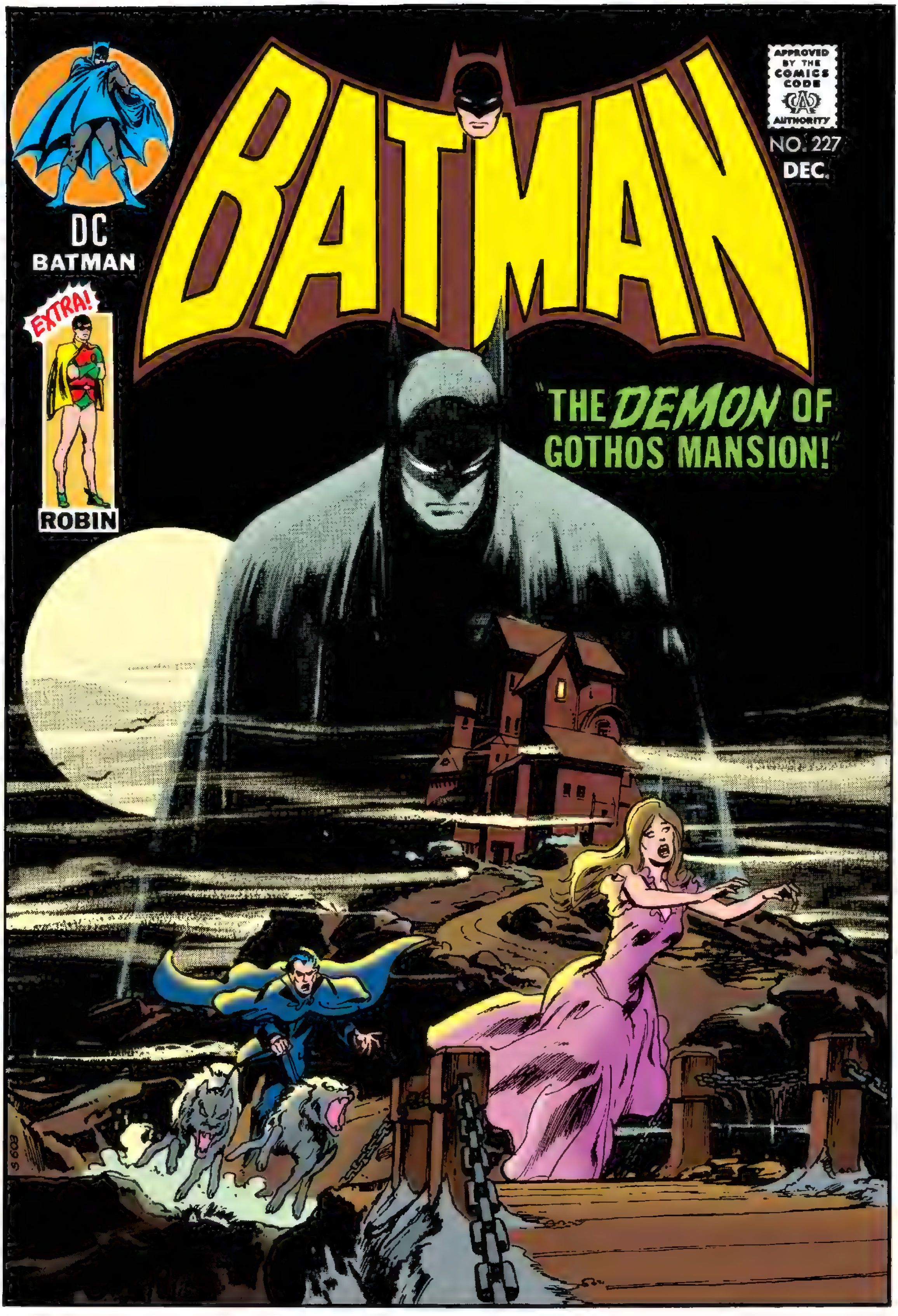
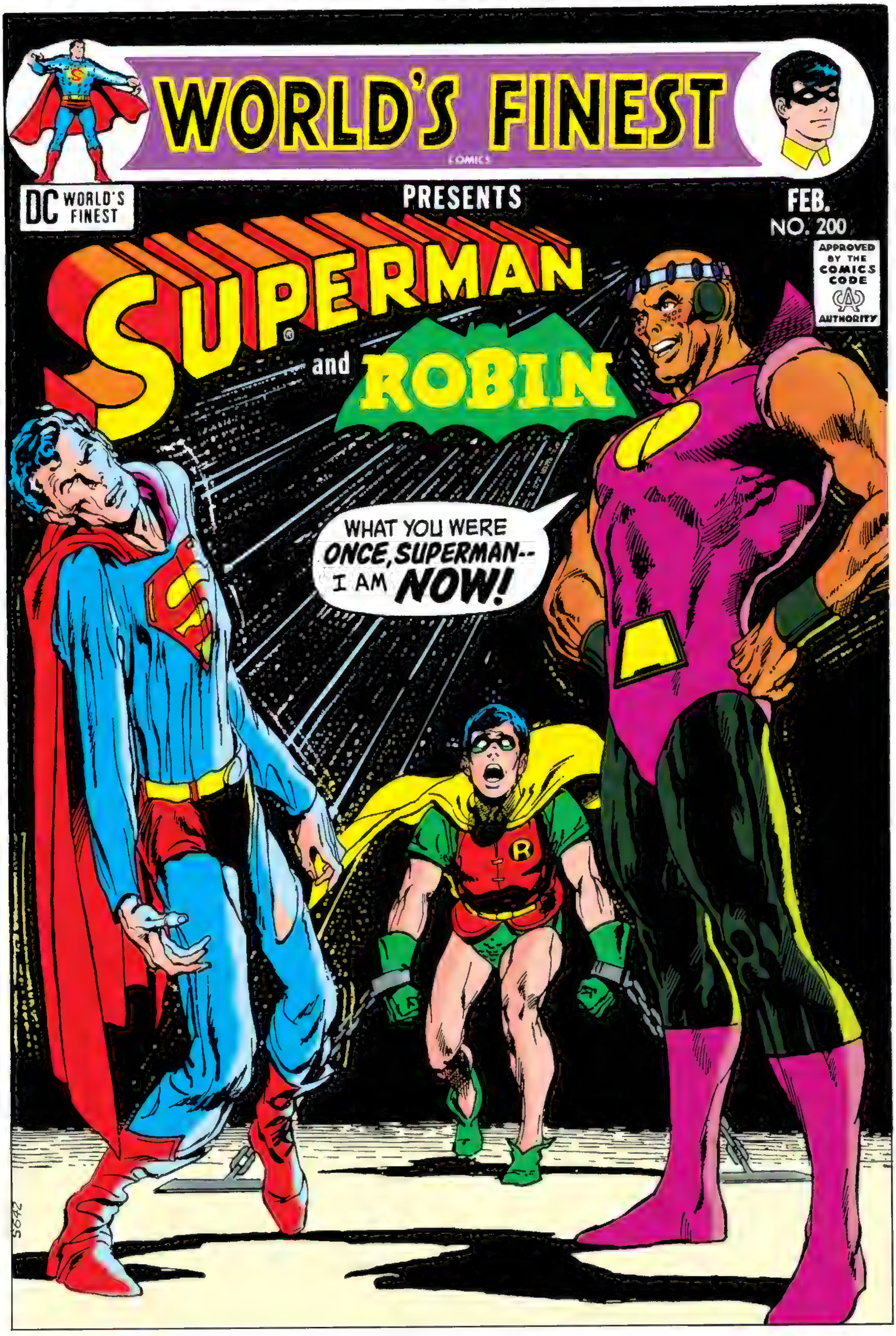


BATMAN #227, December 1970

WORLD'S FINEST COMICS #199, December 1970

DC DETECTIVE COMICS
NO. 406 DEC.
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
Detective Comics presents
BATMAN AND BATGIRL
NO POWER ON EARTH CAN SAVE ME NOW!
CAN A STATUE CRY? Reader-- DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?

DETECTIVE COMICS #406, December 1970



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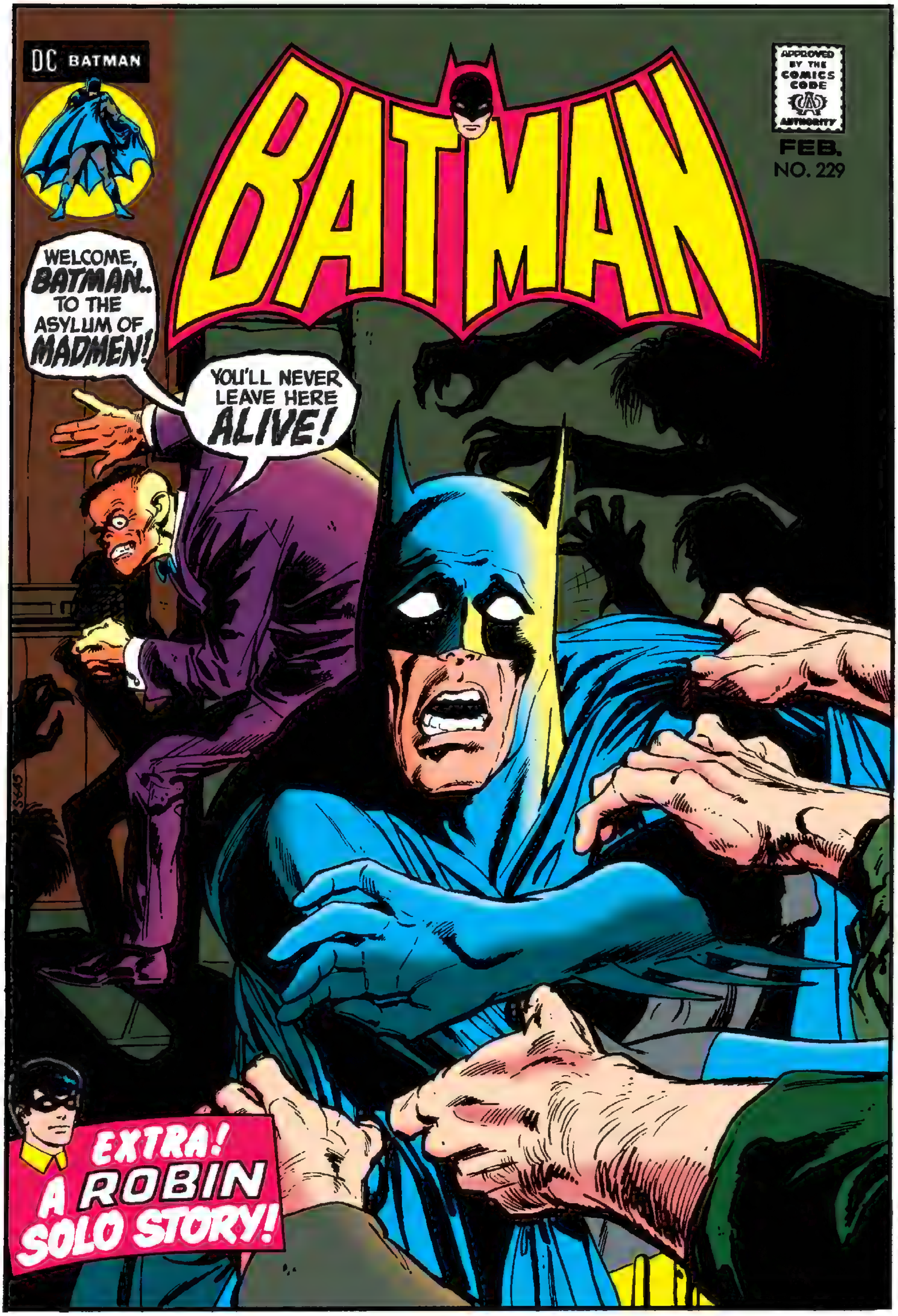
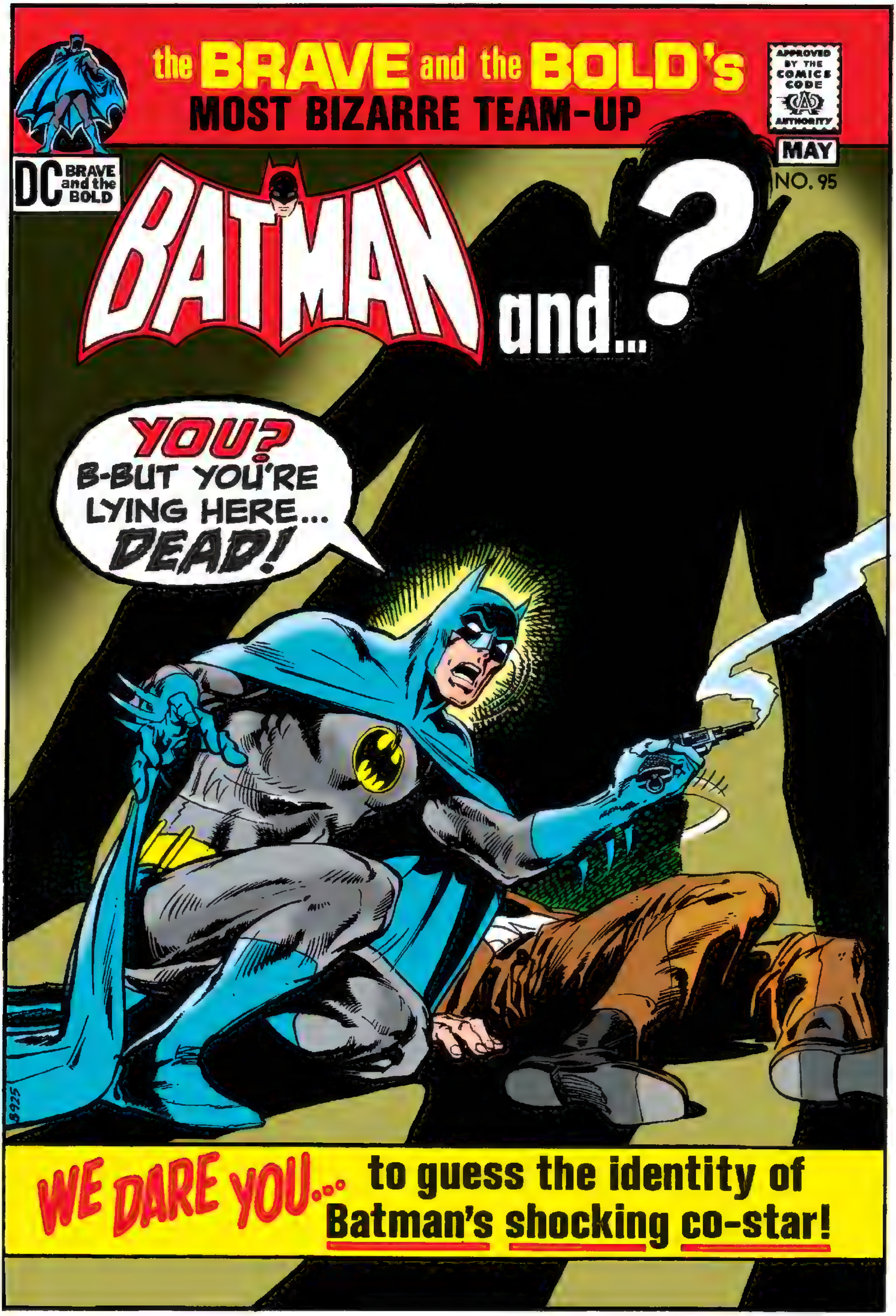
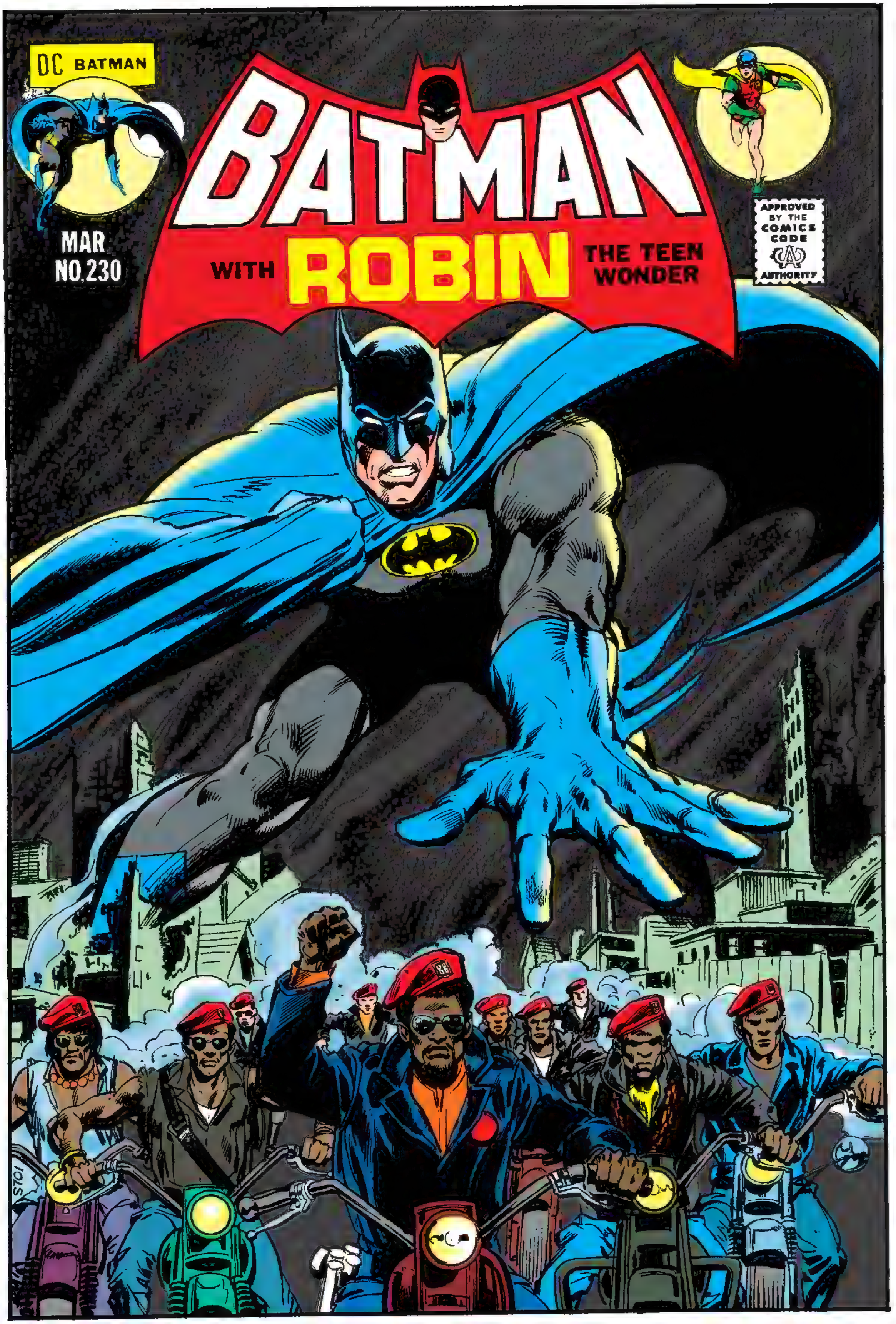


BATMAN #229, February 1971



THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #95, March 1971 · Inks by **Dick Giordano**



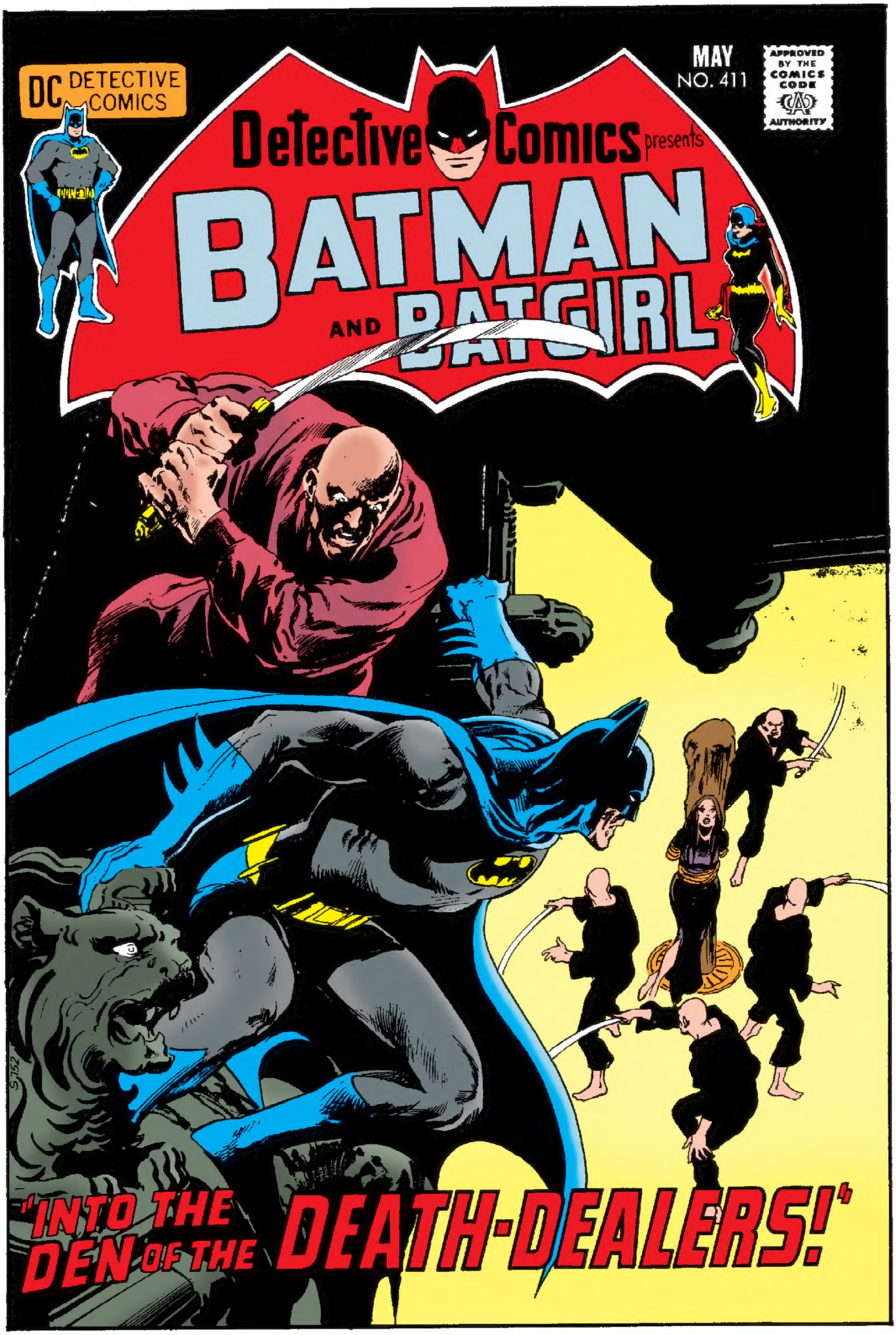
BATMAN #230, March 1971

DETECTIVE COMICS #409, March 1971

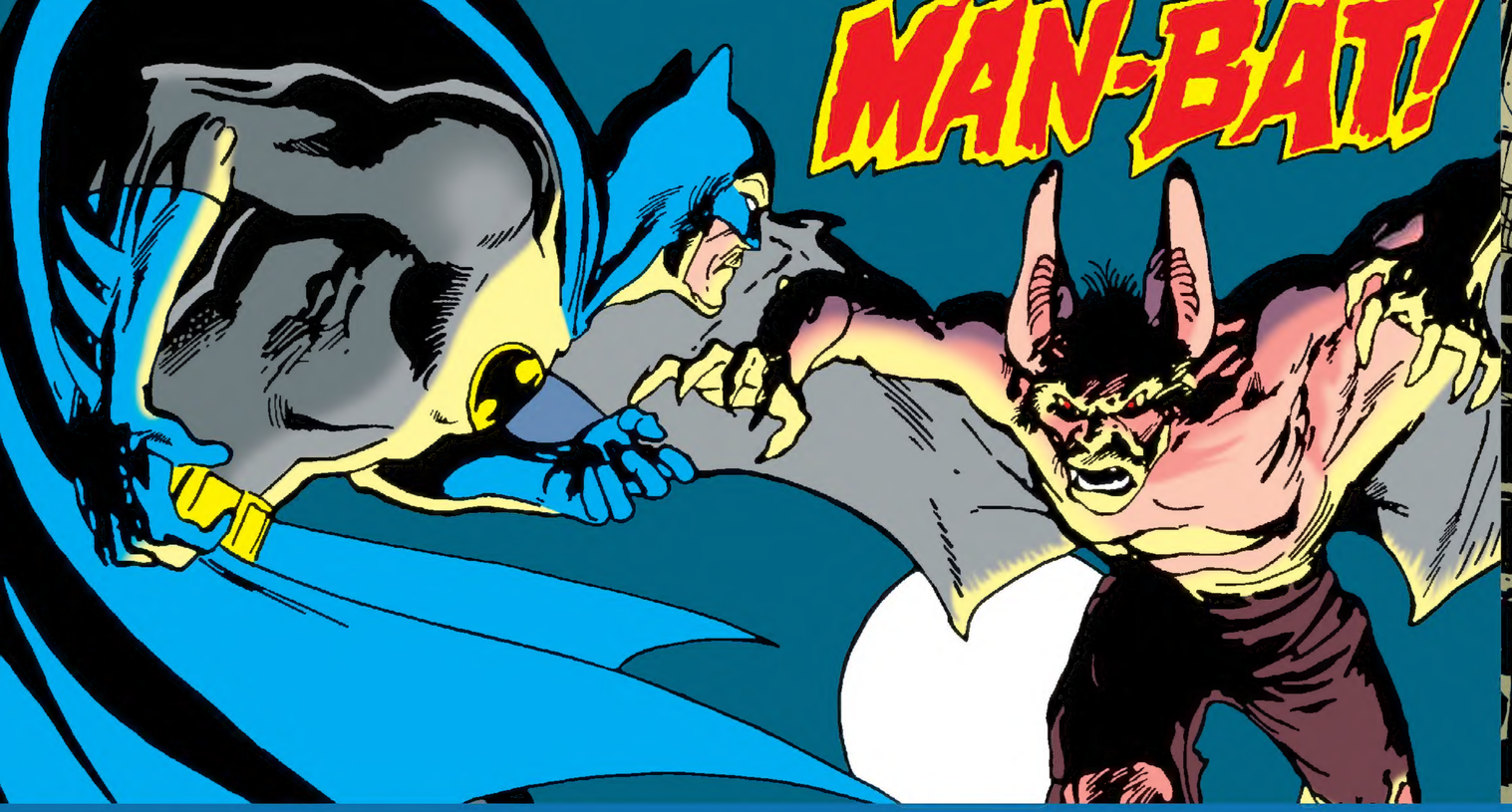
WORLD'S FINEST
COMICS
MAY NO. 202
presents
SUPERMAN and BATMAN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
I COMMAND YOU TO FIGHT TO THE DEATH!
WHEN YOU DIE, I LIVE!
THIS IS NOT AN IMAGINARY FIGHT SCENE! NOR A SYMBOLIC PICTURE! NOR ANY OTHER SORT OF COP-OUT!
$.750

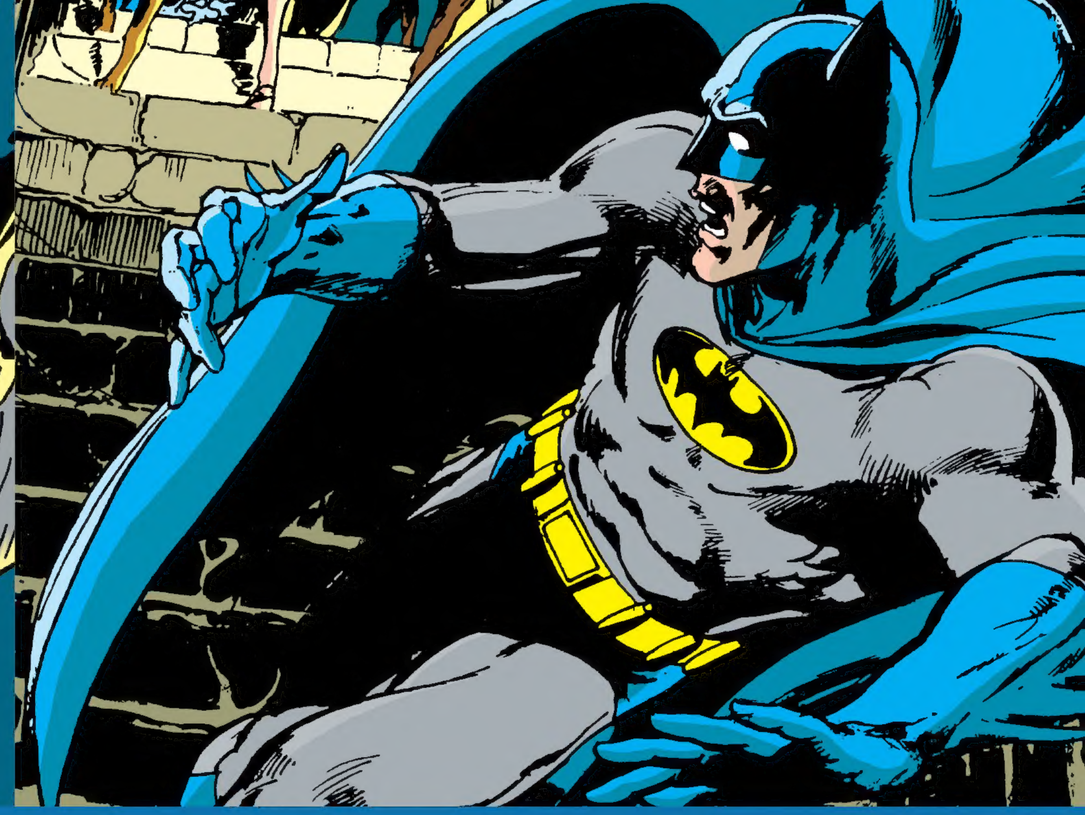
WORLD'S FINEST COMICS #202, May 1971

BATMAN #231, May 1971



DETECTIVE COMICS #411, May 1971





BIOGRAPHY

NEAL ADAMS

Born on June 15, 1941, in New York City, Neal Adams began his comics career drawing pages for *The Archie Comics Joke Book* immediately after graduating from high school (and being turned down for work by DC Comics). Within a year he was also drawing commercial illustration spots as well as background work and full pencil work on Howard Nostrand's *Bat Masterson* syndicated comic strip. Building on this early success, he landed a desk at Johnstone and Cushing, the country's leading "comics for advertising" studio. There, Adams drew comics for such advertisers as Norelco, Bell Telephone, General Electric, AT&T, Tandy Industries and the United States National Guard.

At the age of 20, Adams began drawing the internationally syndicated comic strip based on the popular TV series *Ben Casey*, while at the same time "ghosting" other newspaper strips like Stan Drake's *The Heart of Juliet Jones*, *Peter Scratch*, *Rip Kirby* and *Secret Agent X-9*. *Ben Casey* was a success, appearing in 161 newspapers worldwide, but after nearly four years on the strip, Adams decided to change the direction of his career to illustration and spent six months carefully assembling a new portfolio of his work. However, when the portfolio disappeared from the first agency he left it with, he was forced to seek work in the comic book field once again. After doing work for Jim Warren's horror publications, Adams tried DC once more—this time successfully.

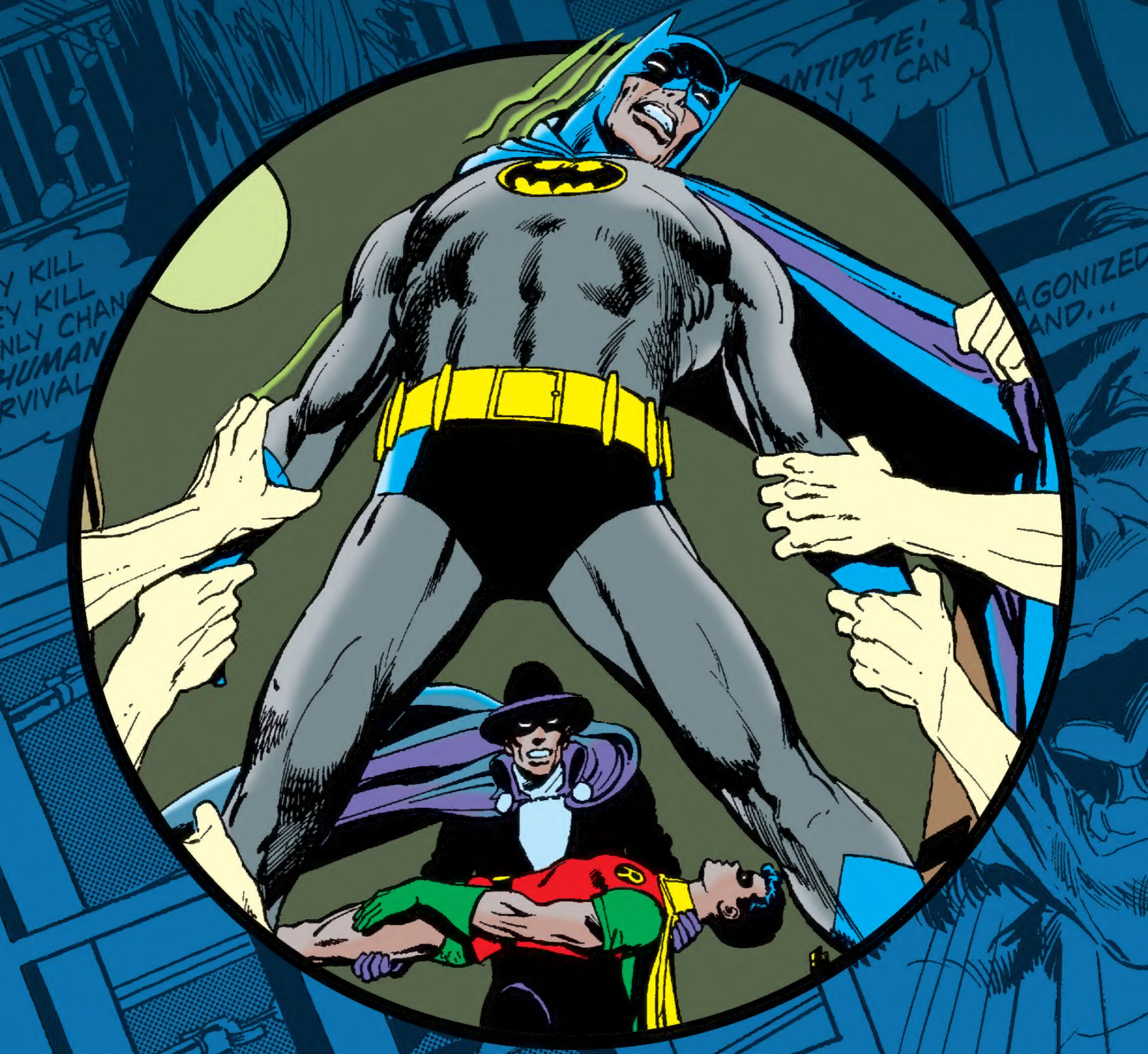
Adams joined DC Comics in 1965 and became an overnight sensation by infusing a new visual vitality into longtime characters. Working closely with editorial director Carmine Infantino, Adams quickly became DC's preeminent cover artist, contributing radical and dynamic illustrations to nearly every title the company published. His first interior work was done for Bob Kanigher's war titles, followed by Elongated Man stories for Julie Schwartz and, curiously enough, Jerry Lewis and Bob Hope comics. Next to come were four issues of THE SPECTRE, two of which Adams also wrote, and two issues of WORLD'S FINEST COMICS for Mort Weisinger. Adams then picked up a new title from Infantino called DEADMAN, a title with which he would soon become closely identified. (Besides the two SPECTRE issues and most of DEADMAN, Adams' writing credits include a number of commercial comic books for Johnstone and Cushing, about a quarter of the writing on *Ben Casey* and some short stories for both DC and Marvel.)

In the early 1970s, Adams did pivotal runs on *The Avengers* and *The Uncanny X-Men* at Marvel Comics. But it was his DC work with writer Dennis O'Neil and inker Dick Giordano during this period that cemented Adams' reputation as a comics legend. The stories featuring Batman, Green Lantern and Green Arrow broke new ground for mainstream comics and attracted major (and overwhelmingly positive) national media attention to the art form.

Later in the 1970s Adams and Giordano opened Continuity Associates (which would become Continuity Studios), using their comics art experience to produce advertising artwork for clients around the world. Continuity became a training ground for new talent, mentored and encouraged by the two founders. During this time Adams also designed a three-part science fiction epic adventure play, *Warp*, which was first staged in Chicago and then moved to Broadway. He earned a Drama Desk Award for his efforts, the only such award earned by a comic book artist. In addition, Adams has been an outspoken supporter of creators' rights in the comics industry and was influential in convincing comic book publishers to return original artwork to the artists who created it.

"For comic book fans of the 1960s and 1970s, the name Neal Adams was an especially electrifying signature to see on a cover—there was no artist in the era that was more distinctive or dynamic than the man who brought an especially evocative commercial art sensibility to Batman."

—Los Angeles Times/Hero Complex

From the late 1960s and into the 1970s, artist Neal Adams revitalized Batman in a profound way. With his eye-catching artwork and his mature storytelling skills, the young creator returned the Caped Crusader to his gritty urban roots. In Adams' talent hands, Batman matured into "the Dark Knight"—a transformation that still resonates with fans to this day. Not only did Adams energize his peers and delight readers, but his work unquestionably inspired future iterations of Batman—in comics and in the movies.

Now all of Neal Adams' seminal Batman work—covers and stories—is being collected in chronological order! This second volume includes Adams' Dark Knight legacy from 1969 through 1971, showing the continuing innovation that the talented artist brought to this legendary crime-fighter. BATMAN BY NEAL ADAMS BOOK TWO collects stories from THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #86 and #93, DETECTIVE COMICS #395, #397, #400, #402, #404, #407, #408 and #410 and BATMAN #219. A substantial cover gallery is also included that features all of the Batman-related books Adams worked on during this period.